

# Sikh History From Persian Sources

**Edited by J.S. Grewal & Irfan Habib**

**KHALSA TERCENTENARY CELEBRATION**

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# Sikh History from Persian Sources

*Translations of Major Texts*

Edited by  
J.S. GREWAL  
and  
IRFAN HABIB



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# Contents

<i>Preface</i>	xi
<i>Introduction by J.S. Grewal</i>	1
<i>Translators' Note</i>	48
<i>Maps</i>	51

## TRANSLATIONS

Text 1.	Akbar Meets Gurū Arjan— From Abū'l Fazl, <i>Akbarnāma</i> translated by SHIREEN MOOSVI	55
Text 2.	Gurū Arjan's Martyrdom, 1606 — From Jahāngīr, <i>Tuzuk-i Jahāngīrī</i> translated by SHIREEN MOOSVI	56
Text 3.	Sikhism and the Sikhs, 1645-46 — From 'Mobad', <i>Dabistān-i Mazāhib</i> translated by IRFAN HABIB	59
Text 4.	A Visit to the Tomb of Gurū Nānak, before 1647 — From Şūrat Singh, <i>Tazkira</i> <i>Pir Ḥassū Telī</i> translated by S. ALI NADEEM REZAVI	85
Text 5.	The Sikhs and Their History, 1696 — From Sujān Rāi Bhaṇḍārī, <i>Khulāṣatu't</i> <i>Tawārīkh</i> . translated by IQBAL HUSAIN	90
Text 6.	Documents on the Sikhs and Gurū Gobind Singh — From <i>Aḥkāṁ-i 'Ālamgīrī</i> , 1703-07 translated by IRFAN HABIB	96

## CONTENTS

Text 7.	The Martial Exploit and Tragic End of a “Son” of Gurū Gobind Singh, 1708 — From ‘Abdu’r Rasūl, <i>Nairang-i Zamāna</i> translated by IRFAN HABIB	100
Text 8.	Gurū Gobind Singh — Notice by Bhimsen, 1708 translated by IRFAN HABIB	104
Text 9.	Gurū Gobind Singh and the Sikhs of the <i>Khālṣa</i> — Reports from Bahādur Shāh’s Court, 1707-12 translated by IRFAN HABIB	106
Text 10.	Gurū Nānak, Gurū Gobind Singh, and the Revolt Under Banda Bahādur, 1709-10 & 1713-16 — From Muḥammad Qāsim “‘Ibrat”, <i>‘Ibratnāma</i> translated by IRFAN HABIB	110
Text 11.	Banda Bahādur’s Rebellion, 1710-16 — From Mirzā Muḥammad, <i>‘Ibratnāma</i> translated by IQBAL HUSAIN	131
Text 12.	Banda Bahādur’s Rebellion, 1710-16 — From Muḥammad Hādī Kāmwar <i>Khān</i> , <i>Tazkiratu’s Salāṭīn Chaghataī</i> translated by S. NADEEM A. REZAVI	142
Text 13.	Banda Bahādur and his Followers — From <i>Khāfī Khān</i> , <i>Muntakhabu’l Lubāb</i> translated by MAJIDA BANO	155
Text 14.	Banda Bahādur and his Followers — From Muḥammad Shafī’ “Wārīd”, <i>Mir’āt-i Wārīdāt</i> translated by IRFAN HABIB	160
Text 15.	Gurū Gobind Singh and his Family, after his Death to 1759-60 — From Chaturman, <i>Chahār Gulshan</i> translated by IRFAN HABIB	163
Text 16.	Re-emergence of Sikh Power in the Punjab, 1748-64 — From Ṭahmās <i>Khān</i> ,	

## Contents

	<i>Qiṣṣa-i Ṭahmās-i Miskīn</i> or <i>Ṭahmās Nāma</i> translated by IRFAN HABIB	169
Text 17.	Re-emergence of Sikh Power in the Punjab — News Reports from Delhi, 1759-65 translated by IRFAN HABIB	187
Text 18.	Sikh Resistance to Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī's Invasion of the Punjab 1764-65 translated by IQTIDAR ALAM KHAN	204
Text 19.	An Account of the Sikhs, 1808 — From <i>Ghulām 'Alī Khān, 'Imādu's Sa'ādat</i> translated by IRFAN HABIB	212
Text 20.	The Sikh Community, 1825 — From James Skinner, <i>Tashrīḥu'l Aqwām</i> translated by SHIREEN MOOSVI	217
	Index	220

# Preface

The Indian History Congress at its fifty-ninth session at the Punjabi University, Patiala, in December 1998, decided to observe the tercentenary of the Khalsa Panth by a special programme of research and publications. A Panel on Sikh History was organized at the sixtieth session of the Congress at Calicut University on 29 December 1999, for which a number of research papers were especially prepared.

The panel itself was not an isolated event, but in line with the effort that has been consistently made at the Indian History Congress to develop all fields of Indian history. Thus we were able to issue in 1999, as part of our programme, a volume of important papers on Sikh history selected from the previous Proceedings of the annual sessions of the Indian History Congress. It came in the form of a paperback entitled *History and Ideology: The Khalsa over 300 Years*, edited by Professors J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga.

While the papers presented at the panel at our sixtieth session are now being published as a separate volume, the Indian History Congress decided that a fruitful contribution could be made by filling a serious void: the absence of a collection of accurate translations of major Persian sources of Sikh history, down to 1765, when Sikh dominance over the Punjab came to be firmly established.

Professor J.S. Grewal very kindly agreed to guide the project, and scholars associated with the Aligarh Historians Society divided up the work of translating the different texts among themselves. Professor Irfan Habib not only translated a number of the texts, himself, but co-ordinated the work of the translators and, with their agreement, went over all the translations to ensure uniformity and consistency. Finally, the translations were submitted

## PREFACE

to Professor Grewal, who supplied a number of explanations that appear in the footnotes, suggested some new textual readings, and proposed corrections in the translations at some places.

Professor Grewal then wrote the Introduction which gives an assessment of the historical value of the information yielded by the texts translated here. He has done so by tallying it with the evidence of the Sikh sources, mainly preserved in Gurmukhi, and so marking out areas where, often enough, later Sikh sources are corroborated by earlier Persian sources and *vice versa*, and other spheres where the Persian texts, especially in relation to details of political and military history, remain our main source.

It is hoped that all students of history will find in this volume a taste of the way history is recorded: behind the biases of narrators one can still discern the truth; and not all the narrators who appear in this volume are slaves to blind prejudice.

For bringing this volume to fruition, many thanks are due to both the editors and the contributors. Tulika continue to be our co-publishers, and I am most grateful to Ms Indu Chandrasekhar and Mr Rajendra Prasad for their kind cooperation.

The work of both word-processing and preparing the camera-ready copy was carried out most conscientiously by Mr Muneeruddin Khan.

Mr Faiz Habib, with the collaboration of Mr Zahoor Ali Khan, has drawn the three maps which appear on pages 52–54.

The publication of this volume would not have been possible but for the generous grants received from the Anandpur Sabib Foundation, Chandigarh, and the Department of Culture, Government of India, New Delhi.

The Aligarh Historians Society provided the required computer and photocopying facilities, enabling us to deliver the camera-ready copy on schedule to publishers.

SHIREENMOOSVI

Secretary  
Indian History Congress

# Introduction

*J.S. Grewal*

## I

This is a unique collection of translations from non-Sikh sources of Sikh history, made from a score of works only a few of which were translated before, and that too not together as a form of evidence on Sikh history. Hardly any significant work up to the eighteenth century is left out. All the translations are made afresh from the most reliable texts; each translation is preceded by a brief introduction and followed by notes.

Such a comprehensive collection of evidence in English translation may be expected to revolutionize our understanding of the Sikh past. If it does not appear to do so, it is only because much of this evidence has been used by a number of historians to reconstruct the Sikh past. In other words, a sort of historiographical 'revolution' is behind us. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, for example, have made piecemeal use of fifteen out of these twenty works. No single historian has used all this evidence before. It makes a tremendous impression in its totality. Only the Indian History Congress could take the initiative and the Aligarh Historians could render this commendable service to the study of Sikh history.

The bulk of this evidence comes from about 1600 to 1765. However, several of the writers look back on Gurū Nānak and his successors, and two of the works selected were written in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The selections thus cover in a sense the whole span of Sikh history up to the early nineteenth century. However, the entire span of Sikh history is not evenly represented. This is understandable: each individual author wrote for his own specific purpose, and not as a historian of the Sikhs. Furthermore, with the exception of the *Dabistān*, information on Sikhism and the Sikhs before the time of Gurū Gobind Singh is rather meagre. Then, there is a much greater concentration on Banda Bahādur than even on Gurū Gobind Singh. Banda Bahādur had

defied the Mughal authority and established what the Sikhs regarded as a sovereign state. The serious nature of the challenge to the established authority, with all its implications for a whole host of beneficiaries of the established order as much as the rulers, called for attention. The grave nature of the conflict also explains the language of ridicule, contempt, anger or resentment used by some of the writers for 'the destroyers of peace and order'.

The political concern of the writers is amply reflected in their concentration on the phase in which the Sikhs re-established their power in the third quarter of the eighteenth century, particularly from 1757-58 to 1765, that is, from the assumption of direct rule over the Punjab by the Afghans to the striking of the Sikh coin at Lahore. These seven or eight years decided the issue between the Sikhs and the Afghans. And these years have received the maximum attention from the authors selected for this volume.

As may be expected, the bulk of the information relates to political history. This by itself is not a limitation. There is little information on political history in the contemporary Sikh sources. Therefore, this information from non-Sikh sources is all the more valuable. In conjunction with later Sikh sources, this information forms the bedrock of the political history of the Sikhs during the first three quarters of the eighteenth century. It must be added, however, that evidence of the authors selected for the volume is not confined to politics. Not only the *Dabistān* but also a number of other works provide information on the social and religious life of the Sikhs, which can provide useful insights in the light of evidence coming from Sikh sources. In any case, the image of the Sikhs which the non-Sikh writers formed from time to time is in itself a form of evidence for a social historian.

The authors belonged to several religious faiths. Apart from Hindus and Muslims, there was a Parsi and a Christian writer. They did not write necessarily from the viewpoint of their religion but some of them were influenced in their attitude by their religious affiliation and social identity. Some of them were catholic or liberal; others were sectarian or conservative. Their attitudes range from empathetic appreciation to hostility. They represent a wide range in terms of social positions too — from the emperor and members of the ruling class to petty officials and candidates for employment. Personal advancement, political purposes, literary or creative talent, and curiosity to know and inform provided the motives for writing. They could be ill-informed, and they certainly had very many unconscious limitations as distant observers — distant in spatial,



## Introduction

temporal and social terms — but many of them wrote on the basis of personal observation and experience, and none of them appears to have deliberately falsified his report.

A number of genres are represented in this collection, which in itself is a reflection of the intellectual and cultural richness of the period. First of all there are the well known general histories, like the *Akbarnāma*, the *Khulāṣatu't Tawārīkh*, the *Tazkiratu's Salāṭīn-i Chaghatā*, the *Muntakhabu'l Lubāb*, and the *Mir'āt-i Wāridāt*. Then there are histories of short periods or regions, like the *Nuskha i Dilkusha*, the *Ibratnāmas* of Muḥammad Qāsim and Mirzā Muḥammad, and the *Imādu's Sa'ādat*. There are memoirs of the emperor Jahāngīr and a one-time slave Ṭahmās Khān. Official and semi-official documents are represented by the *Aḥkām-i Ālamgīrī*, the *Akhbārāt-i Darbar-i Mu'allā*, and the Reports sent from Delhi by the representatives of other courts. There are descriptive works like the *Chahār Gulshan* and the *Tashrīḥu'l Aqwām*. And then there are works which refuse to be easily categorized, like the *Dabistān*, the *Tazkira Pīr Ḥassū Telī*, the *Nairang-i Zamāna* and the *Jangnāma* of Qāzī Nūr Muḥammad.

Two of these twenty works were meant primarily to provide information on the contemporary Sikhs with an eye on their past. The contents of the other works relate to four phases of Sikh history: the Sikh Gurus and their followers before the time of Gurū Gobind Singh; the life of Gurū Gobind Singh; the Sikh uprising under Banda Bahādur; and the Sikh resurgence from about 1750 to 1765. Before turning to the last two writers, we may look at the treatment of these four major themes in all the other works.

## II

It is significant that the two earliest passages relate to the fifth Gurū Arjan and two of the Mughal Emperors. Towards the end of the sixteenth century the Sikh movement was becoming important enough to attract the notice of 'outsiders', including the state. Akbar's visit to Gurū Arjan in 1598 is presented by Abū'l Faḍl as a matter of imperial grace. But this gesture of goodwill had an in-built political dimension too.

The term used by Abū'l Faḍl for the religious position of Gurū Arjan is 'Brahmanical', which is either an intentional slip or just shows that Abū'l Faḍl had little knowledge of the religious aspect of the Sikh movement.

In the *Tuzuk-i Jahāngīrī*, the emperor claims to have watched the Sikh movement with disapproval, presenting the other

side of the same political coin. He did not like Gurū Arjan converting 'ignorant' Muslims to his own faith. Indeed, we know that the Sikh faith was open to Muslims. Bhāi Gurdās mentions Miān Jamāl among the prominent Sikhs of Gurū Arjan. However, this was not the only professed reason for Jahāngīr's action against Gurū Arjan. His blessings to the rebel Prince Khusrau become the crowning cause of capital punishment. There is no doubt that Gurū Arjan had to undergo tortures. Was this the mode of punishment ordered by Jahāngīr?<sup>1</sup>

Incidentally, Jahāngīr does not figure prominently in the works of Sikh writers, or he does not figure at all, in connection with the martyrdom of Gurū Arjan. Ratan Singh Bhangū, who wrote his *Panth Prakāsh* in the 1840s, does refer to Jahāngīr in contrast to his predecessors who had done and said nothing against the Gurus and their Sikhs. Jahāngīr came under the influence of *mullas* and *qazis* and played false with Gurū Arjan. Even so, Bhangū passes the blame to a Khatri.<sup>2</sup> Kesar Singh Chhibber, writing in 1769, does not mention Jahāngīr at all. He refers to Turks in general as the rulers but the initiative against Gurū Arjan is taken by his elder brother Prithia who claimed Guruship. He conspired with Chandu Shāh, a Sahi Khatri and a Dīwān, who had his own score to settle with Gurū Arjan, and he was called to Lahore for interrogation. Thus, the primary villains in the whole situation are Khatri. The fault of the Turks was that they did not do justice to Gurū Arjan. He was tortured, bound, and thrown on the sand in the hot month of Jeth. A Mughal threw a brick at him and his forehead began to bleed. He died of this wound. No Hindu came to claim his body and it was thrown into the river. At a later stage, the Emperor handed over the Sahi Khatri to Gurū Hargobind for retaliatory justice.<sup>3</sup>

The author of the *Dabistān* refers to the blessings of Gurū Arjan for the rebel Prince Khusrau. A heavy fine was imposed on Gurū Arjan, which he was unable to pay. He was bound and kept on the hot sands of Lahore. He died due to the heat of the summer and the tortures inflicted by the officials responsible for collecting the fine. Even Gurū Hargobind was sent as a prisoner to the fort of Gwalior on account of the arrears of fine imposed upon Gurū Arjan. However, this was not the only cause of Gurū Hargobind's difficulties. He had begun to wear the sword and adopted the appearance of a soldier; he used to hunt and to maintain servants. He came into armed conflict with the *gumāshtas* (officials) of Shāh Jahān and had to leave Ramdasapur for Kartarpur in the Jalandhar Doab. There too he had to fight quite a few battles before

## Introduction

he moved to Phagwara and then to Kiratpur in the territory of the refractory hill chief Tārā Chand. There too, Gurū Hargobind maintained seven hundred horses in his stables, three hundred horsemen, and sixty musketeers. His headquarters served as a place of refuge for refractory individuals. The *Dabistān*, thus, provides extremely useful evidence on the change in the attitude of the Mughal Emperors towards the Gurus and the change in the attitude of Gurū Hargobind towards the State.<sup>4</sup>

The author of the *Dabistān* refers to the belief of the Sikhs in the unity of Guruship. The spirit of Gurū Nānak entered the bodies of his successors - Gurū Angad, Gurū Amar Dās, Gurū Rām Dās and Gurū Arjan. That was why each Gurū was referred to as *maḥal*: Gurū Nānak as the first *maḥal*, Gurū Angad as the second *maḥal*, and in this way Gurū Arjan as the fifth *maḥal*. A Sikh who does not regard Gurū Arjan as Bābā Nānak is not a true Sikh. The firm belief of the Sikhs is that all the Gurus are Nānak. Indeed, Bhāi Gurdās underscores the unity of Guruship from Gurū Nānak to Gurū Hargobind in one of his *Vārs*.<sup>5</sup> This is reiterated in another *Vār* in which the metaphors of light and water are used to emphasize that they all are the same.<sup>6</sup> The idea of the unity of Guruship emphasized by Bhāi Gurdās legitimized the succession of Gurū Hargobind to face the rival claim of Prithi Chand and his descendants.

The author of the *Dabistān* does notice the claim of Prithi Chand and his descendants. He says in fact that after the death of Gurū Arjan his brother Prithiā became the Gurū, and his followers used to call him 'Gurū Miharbān'. Actually, Prithi Chand was succeeded by his son Miharbān as the seventh Gurū. At the time of writing the *Dabistān*, 'Gurū Harji' was Miharban's successor. The successors and followers of Prithi Chand thought of themselves as *bhagats* or the devotees of God but the followers of Gurū Hargobind, who too claimed Guruship in his father's place, called them *mīnā* which was a term of reproach. Bhāi Gurdās looks upon Prithi Chand and his successors as 'rebels' and 'false gurūs'; he denounces the *mīnās* in choicest terms in a whole *Vār*.<sup>7</sup>

According to the author of the *Dabistān*, in the compositions of Gurū Nānak God is Niranjan, Parbrahm, or Parmeshwar who does not take any physical form, and Gurū Nānak himself is a human being, but the Sikhs had begun to regard Gurū Nānak as God and the creator of the world. In the compositions of Gurū Nānak God is also the Gurū (Preceptor). Therefore, an equation between the Gurū and God is implied. However, the equation is

metaphorical rather than literal. The *Vārs* of Bhāi Gurdās throw some light on the problem. *Gur Parmesar ek hai*: The Gurū and God are one. The Sikh regards the Gurū as God. He lives in accordance with the Word (*sabad*). 'Regarding the Gurū as God' appears to be the operative idea in Bhāi Gurdās.<sup>8</sup>

The *Dabistān* refers to the compositions of Gurū Nānak as replete with praises of God and ethical instruction. The bulk of his poetry is on the greatness and purity of God. All of it was in the language of the Jats, the peasants who belonged to the lowest category of the Vaishyas of the Punjab. According to Gurū Nānak, as quoted in the *Dabistān*, there are innumerable skies and earths. The *nabīs*, the *aulā*, the *avtārs* and the *siddhs* have attained perfection by devotion to God. Whosoever worships Him sincerely, whatever his path, would attain nearness to God. Non-injury to living beings is the means to this goal. There are two points in this statement which do not find support in the compositions of Gurū Nānak: *ahimsa* and plurality of ways to God. The author of the *Dabistān* relied probably on respectable Sikhs for information on the compositions of Gurū Nānak. It is interesting to note that he does not refer to the Granth compiled by Gurū Arjan, nor to the compositions of the successors of Gurū Nānak who used the epithet 'Nānak' for themselves in their works.

Bhāi Gurdās refers to the Granth compiled by Gurū Arjan and equates the *sabad* of the Gurū with the Gurū: Regard the *sabad* of the Gurū as the Gurū; the *sabad* of the Gurū is veritably his form.<sup>9</sup> A phrase which occurs frequently in the *Vārs* of Bhāi Gurdās for the path of Gurū Nānak is 'beyond the Veda and the Book', that is, the Indian and Semitic scriptures. The path of Gurū Nānak is superior to all others; it is the only highway, compared with numerous foot-paths.<sup>10</sup> Bhāi Gurdās insists on exclusive affiliation to the Gurū.<sup>11</sup> The author of the *Dabistān* refers to the practice of the Sikhs to request the entire congregation to pray for the fulfilment of an individual's wish. Even the Gurū was not an exception. Like Bhāi Gurdās, the author of the *Dabistān* uses the term *sangat* for the Sikh congregation and *dharmsāl* for the Sikh sacred space. The importance given to the *sangat* is amply underscored by Bhāi Gurdās. The congregation of the pious Sikhs (*sadh-sangat*) is the true abode (*sachch-khand*) of God and the Formless One resides in it; the *sadh-sangat* is the locus of Parbrahm Satgur Purakh.<sup>12</sup>

There are some other points in the *Dabistān* which bear comparison with the evidence of Bhāi Gurdās. For example, the belief that Gurū Nānak was the incarnation of Rāja Janak figures in

Bhāi Gurdās who refers to its significance too. Janak combined in himself both temporal and spiritual power (Rāj-Jog).<sup>13</sup> This idea is closely related to the ideal of living pure amidst the impurities of the world, to live in the world but to remain detached. The phrase '*māyā vich udās*' occurs frequently in the *Vārs* of Bhāi Gurdās.<sup>14</sup> The *Dabistān* too mentions that renunciation (*udās*) was not approved of by the Gurus. The swordsmanship of Gurū Hargobind, to which the author of the *Dabistān* makes a reference, is emphasized in Sikh sources.<sup>15</sup> The *Dabistān* illustrates the devotion and dedication of the Sikhs to Gurū Hagobind and the consideration which the Gurū showed for the Sikhs. They should serve other Sikhs as they would serve the Gurū. Complete dedication to the Gurū is emphasized by Bhāi Gurdās. A Sikh of the Gurū serves the Sikhs of the Gurū like his mother, father, brother and friend.<sup>16</sup>

The idea that the position of the Gurū and the Sikh was interchangeable occurs frequently in the *Vārs* of Bhāi Gurdās. Its origin lay in the belief that Gurū Nānak had made Angad his Gurū, 'reversing the course of the stream'. They became one light in two bodies; the Gurū became the disciple and the disciple became the Gurū.<sup>17</sup> The fruit grows on the tree and the tree springs from the fruit; the Gurū becomes the Sikh and the Sikh becomes the Gurū; the Gurū and the Sikh are the same.<sup>18</sup> In the *Dabistān*, the Gurū tells a Sikh: 'regard every Sikh who comes to your home in his name as the Gurū'.

The author of the *Dabistān* indicates at several places that the Sikhs were not much concerned about caste distinctions. There was no restriction on a Brahman becoming the Sikh of a Khatri, or a Khatri subordinating himself to a Jat. A Sikh named Sādh did not hesitate to remove his sacred thread to help the author of the *Dabistān* who was travelling with him from Kabul to the Punjab. Among the Sikhs there were no such modes of worship and austerities as the Hindus felt obliged to observe, and there was no restriction on food and drink. Bhāi Gurdās refers to a prominent Sikh of Gurū Arjan who was formerly a *Chandāl*.<sup>19</sup> All the four *varnas* were reduced to one and the pauper was made equal to the prince.<sup>20</sup> There was no difference between the young and the old, as there was no difference between the pauper and the prince. The house-holding Sikh of the Gurū avoids the sacred thread like dirt.<sup>21</sup>

The author of the *Dabistān* indicates in several ways that the Sikhs had a religious identity of their own. At places, he is quite explicit. The Sikhs did not believe in idols or idol-worship. Like Muslims, Gurū Nānak believed in the Oneness of God, but he

subscribed to the idea of transmigration as well. He did not believe in incarnation, and regarded the gods and goddesses of the Hindus as creatures of God; they did not worship the idols of Hindu gods. The Sikhs did not recite Hindu *mantras*, and they did not care for Sanskrit, regarded by the Hindus as the language of angels. On the whole, thus, the Sikhs are presented as distinct from Hindus and Muslims. Bhāi Gurdās also talks of the Sikh Panth (called *gurmukh*, *sachcha*, *nirol* or *nirmal panth*) as distinct from both Hindus and Muslims. The salient features of the Sikh Panth are: renunciation of renunciation, equality of castes, a new scripture, and transcendence of former *panths*.<sup>22</sup> The True Gurū is also the True King whose emblems are *sadh-sangat* and *Gur-sabad*, which are open to both Hindus and Muslims.<sup>23</sup> In comparison, the worldly rulers are false.<sup>24</sup>

The *Dabistān* contains extremely useful information on the organization of the Sikh community. The Gurus appointed their representatives, called Masands, for the twin purpose of initiating others into the Sikh faith and collecting offerings from the Sikhs. The use of the term *masand* was significant: derived originally from *masnad-i a'alā*, the elevated seat of the Afghan nobles, it was appropriate for the representative of the Gurū who was known as the True King.<sup>25</sup> The Masands had their own deputies. The persons initiated by the latter were known as *melis* of the Masand. Presumably, the persons initiated by the Masand were known as his *sahlang*s.<sup>26</sup> What is much more certain is that the persons initiated by the Gurū himself were known as his *Khālsa*.<sup>27</sup> Since the Sikhs disfavoured renunciation, they pursued agriculture, followed the profession of trade, or that of service. The Masands used to bring to the Gurū the offerings collected from the Sikhs at the time of the Baisakhi when the Sikhs could also come with them. A turban was conferred on the Masand at the time of his departure.<sup>28</sup>

The author of the *Dabistān* (especially in its Version A) gives information on some of the important *masands* of the Gurūs. Chanda (or Jhanda), the grandson of Bābā Buddha who had become a Sikh of Gurū Nānak, was a wealthy Jat and a devout Sikh of Guru Hargobind. His *melis* regarded him as their *gurū*, and without his orders would not even see the Gurū or enter his *dharmsāl*. This piece of information is unusual only in the sense that Chand's *melis* regarded him as their *gurū*. As for going to the Gurū and, therefore, to his *dharmsāl*, the *melis* of a *masand* were expected to accompany him when he visited the Gurū. Possibly, Chanda was a little more autonomous than some other *masands*, suggesting that the relationship of the *masands* with the Gurū was not uniform or rigid.

## Introduction

Debī Chand, son of Pīrāna, was also a Jat *masand* who lived at Chak Ramdas near Wazirabad. Healing powers were attributed to him, as to his father - a belief opposed to the ideals underscored by Bhāi Gurdās. That no Hindu or Muslim could approach him is also opposed to the Sikh ideals propounded by Bhāi Gurdās. If taken as authentic, this information would indicate a certain degree of difference between norms and actual practice. Parāya Murārī, another *masand*, was a descendant of the *masand* Parmānand. Was the office in some cases becoming hereditary? Murārī had a *sahlang* called Anantnand Jogī who was actually a trader and lived at Shamsabad near Attock. He was made a *masand* and was a sincere follower of the Gurū, serving every Sikh as he would serve the Gurū. As stated in the *Dabistān*, this was in accordance with the injunctions of Gurū Hargobind.

Bidhiā, another Jat *masand*, was formerly a robber who was reputed to help the needy and the poor. He was asked by Gurū Hargobind to abandon robbery, and he was given the blessing of abundance. A Sikh who was sent to collect offerings on his behalf, distributed them among the poor on the plea that Bidhiā himself would have done precisely that on receiving the offerings. According to Kaiwān Parra, Bidhiā and his people still practised robbery on behalf of the Gurū. The stories about his past generosity towards the poor were regarded by the people as fables. In the Sikh tradition, Bidhiā or Bidhi Chand was a Chhina Jat who was formerly a robber. As the Sikh of the Gurū, he stole horses meant for the Gurū but forcibly snatched from the Sikhs by the Mughal administrators.

There are a few more points which call for attention. There was little trace of Islam in the hills, it is true, but the author's statement that most people from amongst the masses were the Guru's followers does not appear to be true. The author of the *Dabistān* ascribes to Gurū Hargobind the idea of the unreality of the universe, like things seen in a dream. It is true that the metaphor is used in the *Granth Sāhib* but the idea that the world is an illusion is not characteristic of Sikhism. In the *Dabistān*, it is said that the title 'Nānak' was used for its author by Gurū Hargobind in letters addressed to him. This does not make any sense, but the authenticity of the sentence in the printed edition of the text need not be doubted.<sup>29</sup> That Gurū Hargobind was expected to pay appropriate respect to persons of known sanctity belonging to other faiths is evident from the reference to Parra Kaiwān's visit to Kiratpur.

Gurū Hargobind wanted to install his eldest son, Bābā Gurditta, in his place as the Gurū, but disobedience cost him his

life. His elder son, Har Rāi, was designated in his place as Gurū Hargobind's successor. The robe of honour was draped on his body to mark his succession, and all other members of the household were ordered to obey him. This description of Gurū Har Rai's succession in the *Dabistān* suggests that he was installed as the Gurū in the lifetime of Gurū Hargobind. It harmonizes with the Sikh belief that Gurū Nānak had installed Lehna (Angad) as the Gurū in his lifetime.

We have dwelt a little long on the *Dabistān* to underscore its importance for our understanding of the pre-Khālṣa Panth. The information it gives is not only comprehensive but also extremely significant when combined with the evidence of Bhāi Gurdās who wrote mostly in the early decades of the seventeenth century. If the *Dabistān* does not provide information on all the dimensions covered by Bhāi Gurdās, the *Vārs* of Bhāi Gurdās do not contain all the information which the *Dabistān* has to offer in rather concrete detail. On Gurū Hargobind in particular there is no contemporary evidence which is so valuable as that of the *Dabistān*.

The author of the *Dabistān* does not say much about Gurū Angad, Gurū Amar Dās, and Gurū Rām Dās. The descendants of Gurū Nānak were there in the Punjab (presumably at Kartarpur on the Ravi). They were called Kartaris, or the worshippers of Kartar (God). In the opinion of some people, Guruship did not descend to the sons of Gurū Nānak. A Trehan Khatri, Angad, succeeded him in accordance with his decision. After him came Gurū Amar Dās, a Bhalla Khatri, and then Gurū Rām Dās, a Sodhi Khatri. Gurū Arjan was his son and successor. The number of Sikhs increased under every Gurū so that in the time of Gurū Arjan some Sikhs were to be found in most of the cities of the inhabited world. On the argument that Gurū Nānak had forbidden meat eating, Gurū Arjan forbade it all afresh. But the practice was re-introduced by Gurū Hargobind.<sup>30</sup>

The founder of the *panth*, Gurū Nānak, receives considerable attention as we have noticed already. He was a Bedi Khatri who served as a *modi* (store-keeper) under Daulat Khān Lodī and became famous in the time of Bābur. The author of the *Dabistān* refers to his renouncing the family as well as his occupation to undergo austerities. There is a mere reference to his travels which figure so prominently in the *Janamsākhīs* and in the *Vārs* of Bhāi Gurdās, connected with the idea that Gurū Nānak 'saved' people in all the four directions through the propagation of his message. The followers of Gurū Nānak attributed many miracles to him. Indeed, the *Janamsākhīs* dwell on his miracles. Significantly, one of his



## Introduction

miracles was that being unhappy with the Afghan rulers he brought in the Mughals. Some of the later Sikh writers look upon Gurū Nānak as the bestower of rulership.<sup>31</sup> The image of Gurū Nānak among the common people, according to the *Dabistān*, was that he used both Hindu and Muslim symbols — the image thus being that of both Hindu or Muslim, or being equidistant from Hindus and Muslims.

The author of the *Dabistān* approached the Sikhs as a researcher; the author of the *Tazkira Pīr Ḥassū Telī* approached Gurū Nānak as a believer. Though a disciple of Pīr Ḥassū Telī, Ṣūrat Singh was attracted by Gurū Nānak's spiritual reputation and his compositions. He undertook a pilgrimage to the *mazār* of Gurū Nānak at Kartarpur on the Ravi. There he saw a *marhī*, beside the *mazār*. For explanation he turned to the keepers of the *marhī* who told him a story that Ṣūrat Singh narrates. It is interesting to note that a similar story is narrated by Kesar Singh Chhibber, writing more than a century later (1769), who also visited Kartarpur personally and saw there a mosque and a well in an enclosure with a single entrance. The well had been dug by Hindus and the mosque built by Muslims.<sup>32</sup>

Sujān Rāi, a Bhandari Khatri of Batala, a place associated with the marriage of Gurū Nānak, may be expected to have reliable information on the Sikhs. But he does not seem to have been a close observer or a meticulous researcher. His account of the Gurus is rather brief but full of mistakes. He refers to Gurū Nānak's gnosticism and his verses. Gurū Nānak, he says, was born in 1469 at Talwandi Rāi Bhuna where his maternal grandfather had a house. He showed miracles from a very young age. He travelled widely before he got married at Batala and settled in a village on the Ravi. He died at the age of 70 to 80 years in the reign of Salim Shāh. This date is wrong, like several other dates in Sujān Rai's account of the Gurus.

At the time of his death, Gurū Nānak appointed a Trehan Khatri named Lahina as his successor with the title of Gurū Angad who occupied the seat for thirteen years. This duration, like the durations given for the other Gurus, is correct. But Sujān Rāi goes on to say that Gurū Angad had no son and, therefore, he appointed his son-in-law, Amar Dās, a Bhalla Khatri, as his successor. Gurū Amar Dās had sons but he nominated his son-in-law, Rām Dās, a Sodhi Khatri, as the succeeding Gurū. His son, Gurū Arjan, then occupied the sacred seat to be succeeded by his son, Gurū Hargobind, who was succeeded by his grandson, Gurū Har Rāi. His younger

son, Gurū Har Kishan, succeeded him. Gurū Tegh Bahādur, the younger son of Gurū Hargobind, succeeded Gurū Har Kishan. Gurū Tegh Bahādur was imprisoned in 1670-71 or 1673-74 and executed at Delhi in accordance with the orders of Aurangzeb. He was succeeded by his son, Gurū Gobind Rāi.<sup>33</sup>

This bare outline is not free from mistakes but sets the line of succession straight. Writing in 1695, Sujān Rāi remains silent on the martyrdom of Gurū Arjan and the martial activity of Gurū Hargobind and Gurū Gobind Singh.

Sujān Rāi underscores the religious life of the Sikhs. There were many mystics, ascetics, prayerful men and discourses among them. Reading and singing the verses of their Guide was the essence of their worship. They had great faith in their Guide and served even strangers and thieves who took the name of Bābā Nānak. They treated all men alike, whether friends or enemies. Sujān Rāi refers to *Udāsīs* as the followers of Bābā Nānak. They praised and glorified God in a manner which Sujān Rāi associates with the Sikhs in general. Was it asceticism and celibacy which made the *Udāsīs* different from the other followers of Gurū Nānak?<sup>34</sup>

Sujān Rāi refers to Akbar's visit to Gurū Arjan who was highly reputed for his knowledge of God. Akbar was pleased with the recitation of Gurū Nānak's verses. Gurū Arjan acknowledged the honour conferred on him and made a suitable offering to the emperor. Akbar accepted his plea to reduce the revenue demand which had been raised due to the Emperor's presence in the Punjab. The reduction in the rate of revenue-demand is mentioned in the *Akbarnāma* but not in connection with the Emperor's visit to Gurū Arjan. In about a hundred years, the two incidents coalesced into one. This could enhance Gurū Arjan's prestige in the eyes of the people, as suggested by a modern historian.<sup>35</sup>

Sujān Rāi is the only historian who refers to Gurū Har Rai's association with Dārā Shukoh in his flight to the Punjab. Outwardly preparing to fight but inwardly meditating escape, Dārā Shukoh alienated the support of Rāja Rāj rūp of Nurpur and Gurū Har Rāi. Both of them left Dārā Shukoh's camp on the pretext of collecting more men. Gurū Har Rāi is said to have gone to Dārā Shukoh with 'a large force'. Presumably, Gurū Har Rāi had kept up a force like Gurū Hargobind. According to the Sikh tradition, Gurū Har Rāi was called by Aurangzeb, and he sent his elder son Rām Rāi to Delhi, which does suggest that Gurū Har Rāi was supposed to be associated with Dārā Shukoh.

Non-Sikh writers continued to take notice of the Sikh

## Introduction

movement and some of them are included in the present selection. Bhimsen refers to Gurū Nānak's service (*naukarī*), his association with religious men, his disciples in the territory of Lahore and Multan, his compositions, and his deputies. No country, city, township or village was there now without his followers. Offerings were carried to his 'descendants' who are his 'successors'. They spent their life in splendour and some of them took to the path of rebellion. Gurū Tegh Bahādur was among them. He called himself *Pādshāh* and a large number of people gathered around him. When Aurangzeb came to know of his activity, he summoned the Gurū to the Court, and he was executed. We may be sure that Bhimsen relied on what he had heard from some people who had only a general and rather vague idea of the early Sikh movement. Nevertheless, Bhimsen's reference to the cause of Gurū Tegh Bahādur's execution is significant. Most of the non-Sikh sources mention Gurū Tegh Bahādur's militancy as the reason for Aurangzeb's action. By contrast, the Sikh sources dwell exclusively on the religious dimension of the situation.<sup>36</sup>

In the *Akḥbārāt*, the reporter who submitted a brief report on the Khālsa refers to Gurū Tegh Bahādur as Tiyaḡ Mal, a successor of Gurū Nānak and the predecessor of Gurū Gobind Singh, who was associated with 'Māhārāja Rām Singh'. The reporter does not refer to Gurū Tegh Bahādur's execution. Muḡammad Qāsim in his *Ibratnāma* refers to Gurū Tegh Bahādur having come under the wrath of Aurangzeb to be condemned to death. The Emperor had regard for royal power but he also associated with religious men. Some of the mystics aligned with him of their own accord. Others, like Sarmad, tasted martyrdom. Gurū Tegh Bahādur was in the latter category. He was condemned not only for religious reasons but also because he lived in great splendour and his followers claimed sovereignty for him. In fact, a large number of people had begun to follow Gurū Har Rāi (who is wrongly mentioned as Gurū Tegh Bahādur's father), and to glorify him. Gurū Har Rāi was a successor of Gurū Angad (no other Gurū is mentioned). It is quite obvious that Muḡammad Qāsim was trying to make some sense of whatever little he had heard from other people. In this context, his image of Gurū Nānak becomes interesting. Gurū Nānak associated with Muslim mystics, scholars and learned men; he also went in step with the Veda-reading Brahmans. In the midst of prevailing duality, he maintained good relations with all people. If he built a temple at one place, he built a mosque at another. He went on pilgrimage to both Mecca and Kashi. His 'words' created uproar in every country.

He was indebted to Shaikh Farīd and Shāh 'Abdu'r Raḥmān Bakhtiyār for spiritual attainment. Gurū Nānak is presented here as almost a Muslim and a Hindu at the same time, a sort of '*Hindu kā Gurū, Musalmān kā Pīr*'.

Writing in 1759-60, Rāi Chaturman takes notice of 'Hindu Sects' in his *Chahār Gulshan*. 'Nānak-Panthis' are included in this section of his work, but he was not sure. In his view, Gurū Nānak was a Vaishnava who worshipped Rām (which is obviously wrong). But his followers held that he was opposed to the Veda. Sikhism had become a separate faith, whether because Gurū Nānak himself established a new path or because his successors introduced innovations. In any case, it was necessary to give an account of the Nānak-Panthis because in every country and city they were found in thousands. Rāi Chaturman's account of the Gurus from Gurū Nānak to Gurū Tegh Bahādur is based on Sujān Rāi Bhandārī's work. He tries to improve upon his source but without any success.

### III

Gurū Gobind Singh receives considerable attention from the non-Sikh writers but almost entirely for the post-Khālsa phase of his life, that is, the last eight or nine years. Even the institution of the Khālsa does not receive much attention. What gets emphasized in the non-Sikh sources is the political activity of Gurū Gobind Singh and his followers. By far the most important evidence on Gurū Gobind Singh comes from the *Aḥkām* and the *Aḥbārāt*.

The extracts from the *Aḥkām-i Ālamgīrī* have an importance of their own. The first one refers to the destruction of a Sikh temple in the town of Burya in accordance with imperial orders. The mosque built in its place was destroyed by the followers of Gurū Nānak who killed its custodian too. The primary concern of the emperor was with the conduct and appointment of the *qāzī* and the *muhtasib* in Burya. What is significant for us is the date of the event, the early years of the eighteenth century. Why was a Sikh temple destroyed now? Instituted in 1699, the Khālsa were aggressively active in the countryside as well as in towns like Delhi and Ramdaspur and the Mughal authorities had to intervene.<sup>37</sup> Could they be active in Burya? Presumably so, because the mosque built there in place of a *gurdwara* was destroyed by 'the worshippers of Nānak' — probably, the Khālsa. The spirit of aggression against the Mughal authorities, and even more so the confession of murder, strongly suggest the reaction of the Khālsa against the aggressive action of Wazīr Khān, the *faujdār* of Sirhind, who had already

## Introduction

provided support to the vassal chief of Bilaspur against Gurū Gobind Singh.<sup>38</sup>

The second extract from the *Aḥkāṁ-i 'Ālamgīrī* leaves no doubt that detailed report of Wazīr Khan's action against Gurū Gobind Singh was sent to the Emperor and seen by him. The letter refers to a commander of 700 cavalry with a park of artillery having been sent against Gurū Gobind Singh, the Gurū taking refuge in the house of the *Zamīndār* of Chamkaur, the death of his two sons and other companions in a battle, and the capture of one son and his mother. According to the Sikh tradition the two younger sons of the Gurū were betrayed into the hands of Wazīr Khān. Both of them were killed in cold blood and their grandmother (not mother) died of grief. There is no mention of Wazīr Khān's action against the sons of Gurū Gobind Singh in this letter but it alludes to 'matters' mentioned in an earlier despatch by Wazīr Khān. The *Zafarnāma* of Gurū Gobind Singh, assumed to have been addressed to the Emperor, refers to the death of all his four sons.

The third extract from the *Aḥkāṁ* is an order addressed to Mun'im Khān, the Deputy Governor of Lahore, in which he is told that on a petition from Gurū Gobind Singh to be allowed to see the Emperor in person, a mace-bearer and Shaikh Muḥammad Yār, a *manṣabdār*, had been sent with an order for Gurū Gobind Singh through Mun'im Khān who was asked to approach the Gurū through a tactful person to bring him round to accompany the mace-bearer and the *manṣabdār*. All this information is given to Wazīr Khān in the fourth extract which mentions the name of the mace-bearer as Muḥammad Beg. It is added that Mun'im Khān was ordered to summon Gurū Gobind Singh to his presence and then convey him to the imperial court. Wazīr Khān is told that when Gurū Gobind Singh reaches the environs of Sirhind he should be provided with an escort to let him pass through the territory under his jurisdiction. Gurū Gobind Singh should be reassured of safety and if he needed any money to meet the expense on travel, it should be provided out of his effects seized by Wazīr Khān. This, in all probability is a reference to the plunder of Anandpur after its evacuation by Gurū Gobind Singh and his Khālsa.<sup>39</sup> These extracts from the *Aḥkāṁ* are useful in themselves. What is even more important, they add a new dimension to the evidence of the *Zafarnāma*, and the *Gursobhā*.<sup>40</sup>

'Abdu'r Rasūl's *Nairang-i Zamāna* is an account of his journey through Rajasthan. Among other things, he describes an armed conflict between the followers of Gurū Gobind Singh and the Rajput garrison of the fort of Chitor. The leader of the Sikh

party was a young son of Gurū Gobind Singh. His name is not mentioned. In the *Gursobhā*, a work on Gurū Gobind Singh completed in 1711, the name is given as Zorāwar Singh who, according to the author of the *Gursobhā*, had fought earlier in the battle of Chamkaur.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, we cannot accept as a fact that Zorāwar Singh, or any other son of Gurū Gobind Singh, participated in the *fracas* at Chitor because of the weightier evidence for the death of all the four sons of Gurū Gobind Singh much before he met Bahādur Shāh. What the *Nairang-i Zamāna* establishes beyond any doubt is the fact of armed conflict between Sikhs and Rajputs. But this was by no means the first incident of its kind. The Khālśa of Gurū Gobind Singh had fought battles with the hill Rajputs before the final evacuation of Anandpur and, according to the *Gursobhā*, with the Rajputs in Rajasthan after that event.<sup>42</sup>

Bhimsen's *Nuskha-i Dilkushā* does not take much notice of Gurū Gobind Singh who is stated to be a 'descendant' of Gurū Nānak. After his decisive victory over Prince A'ẓam, when Bahādur Shāh was at Agra, Gurū Gobind Singh obtained the good fortune of presenting himself before the Emperor. The fact of Gurū Gobind Singh's meeting with Bahādur Shāh is found in both Persian and Punjabi (Gurmukhi) sources. What is interesting about Bhimsen's notice is that it was not based on information coming from Sikh sources. He had 'heard' about the Sikhs, as he heard that Gurū Gobind Singh did not follow the ways of religious men and was proud of his soldierly profession.

In the *Akhbārāt* from the court of Bahādur Shāh, the first extract refers to Gurū Gobind Singh coming armed to the presence of Bahādur Shāh and offering one hundred *ashrafis*. He received from the Emperor a robe of honour and a medallion set with precious stones. This gets confirmation from a *hukamnāma* of Gurū Gobind Singh addressed to the Khālśa in the Punjab which reveals also the purpose of his meeting the Emperor. He wished to get Anandpur back. This can be inferred from the hope he expressed to return to Kahlur before long.<sup>43</sup> But this did not happen, and Gurū Gobind Singh remained close to the imperial camp virtually till his death. Another extract refers to the death of Jamshed Khān Afghan at the hands of Gurū Gobind Singh. A mourning robe was given to the Khān's son. To Gurū Gobind Singh's son too a mourning robe was given after the Gurū's death. When the question about the property left behind by Gurū Gobind Singh was presented to the Emperor, he ordered : "Let them not interfere with the property of dervishes". The mourning robe after Gurū Gobind Singh's death

## Introduction

was given presumably to an adopted son.<sup>44</sup> The identity of Jamshed Khān Afghan is not clear. Why was his son given a mourning robe? Were they connected with the camp of Bahādur Shan in some way?<sup>45</sup>

By May 1710, the activities of Banda Bahādur were the subject of rumours. A *vakīl* at Delhi sent a report on the Khālsa. According to him, Gurū Gobind Singh used to exercise authority in the submontane tract of Kahlur. In his conflict with the hill chiefs, the Mughal imperial forces supported the vassal chiefs. After much armed contention, Gurū Gobind Singh was ejected from that territory, and his children were killed. Aurangzeb called him to the court but was overtaken by death. After Bahādur Shah's accession to the throne, Gurū Gobind Singh met the Emperor through the mediation of Mun'im Khān and received his attention. Finally, he died at the hands of an Afghan who too got killed.

The report goes on to add that Gurū Gobind Singh had dismissed the Masands to establish the Khālsa for whom it was obligatory to keep uncut hair. The institution of the Khālsa created tensions between the Khālsa and the other Sikhs, notably the Khatri Sikhs. Marriages between them were given up.<sup>46</sup> The Khālsa and the other Sikhs actually fought each other at Chak Gurū (Amritsar) and the Khālsa were victorious. A force was sent from Lahore but it failed to control matters.<sup>47</sup>

Muḥammad Qāsim's account of Gurū Gobind Singh was based on what he had heard from others. Gurū Gobind Singh increased his resources to vie with the *mansabdars* of 5000, or even with rulers of principalities. People began to flock to him from all directions. Some *zamindars*, having come under his spell, refused to pay tribute to the Emperor. Imperial orders were issued to Wazīr Khān to ask Gurū Gobind Singh to discard the customs of royalty and live peacefully like his ancestors. If he did not desist, Wazīr Khān should expel him from those territories. Gurū Gobind Singh's refusal to accept the Emperor's authority led to contention and slaughter. Two infant sons of the Gurū, and some women, were captured by Wazīr Khān and killed. Consequently, a large number of people became hostile to Wazīr Khān, and even towards the Muslims.<sup>48</sup> Gurū Gobind Singh abstained from cutting his hair, gave up the sacred thread, and began to wear a chain of iron. His followers began to imitate him. They were called Khālsa. Many low-class people took to this mode of life for securing better means of livelihood. The others were known as *chākar*. This hearsay account highlights the political concerns of Gurū Gobind Singh, and betrays almost total ignorance of the institution of the Khālsa.

Encouraged by Bahādur Shāh, Gurū Gobind Singh accompanied the imperial camp in the hope that he would receive imperial favours for performing service.<sup>49</sup> A quarrel with some Afghans who had sold horses to the Gurū resulted in his death. The assailant, however, was killed by him. The Gurū's body was cremated. His death gave a fresh cause of mourning to his followers. In suggesting the motive of revenge, arising out of resentment, Muḥammad Qāsim is akin to many a Sikh author. In both, the political aspirations of the Khālṣa are generally ignored.<sup>50</sup>

Mirzā Muḥammad in his *‘Ibratnāma* looks upon Gurū Gobind Singh as introducing “some new customs” in the tradition of Gurū Nānak and his successors who are seen more or less as Hindu recluses. The Sikhs who accepted Gurū Gobind Singh's innovation came to be known as the Khālṣa. With their support he began to establish his power over *zamīndārs* of the neighbourhood through warlike means. Wazīr Khān repeatedly sent forces against him and the Gurū lost two of his sons in battles. When Bahādur Shāh was marching from Peshawar to Delhi, Gurū Gobind Singh accompanied the imperial camp. Actually, Gurū Gobind Singh was in Rajasthan at that time. Mirzā Muḥammad rightly says later that the Gurū accompanied the Emperor to the Deccan. There he was killed by an Afghan who bore enmity towards him. He was cremated according to the custom of the Hindus. Ajīt Singh, popularly known as his son, received the Emperor's favours and continued to remain in his suit.

According to Rāi Chaturman, Gurū Gobind ascended the spiritual seat of his father in the reign of Bahādur Shāh in 1710-11 (actually, 1675). He guided his disciples for twenty-one years (which would place his death in 1731-32!). He himself instigated an Afghan to take revenge for the death of his father at the hands of Gurū Tegh Bahādur, and the Afghan killed him. Rāi Chaturman's evidence on Gurū Gobind Singh is grossly wrong.

Rāi Chaturman goes on to talk of Ajīt Singh, Hathī Singh, Mātā Sundarī, and Mātā Sāhib Devi as the surviving members of Gurū Gobind Singh's family. Ajīt Singh, who had been recognized by the Gurū as his son after the death of all his ‘three sons’, with permission from the Imperial court, was enthroned on the spiritual seat. This probably was a view popularized by the followers of Ajīt Singh. A contemporary Sikh writer states explicitly that Gurū Gobind Singh did not select any single person to be his successor. Instead, he declared that Guruship henceforth was vested in the Khālṣa and the scripture.<sup>51</sup>



## Introduction

In the reign of Farrukh Siyar, Mātā Sundari established a separate spiritual seat and some Sikhs deserted Ajit Singh to join her. In the second year of Muḥammad Shāh's reign (1721-22) Ajit Singh was unjustly killed on the false accusation that he had killed a Muslim *dervish*. His son Hathī Singh was a mere child at that time. His well-wishers took him to Mathura to ensure that he was not harmed in Delhi. He was alive in 1759-60. Some of the Nānak-Panthis had turned away from him but many were still attached to him. When Mātā Sundari died, people turned to Sāhib Devi, known as the *Kanwāra Dola* (virgin bride). She too died after a year. Now, there was only one place of prayer for the Sikhs, the place of Hathī Singh, son of Ajit Singh, who lived in Mathura with a following of one hundred to two hundred persons. Chaturman is not the only writer to talk of Ajit Singh, Hathī Singh, Mātā Sundari and Mātā Sāhib Devi as claimants to Guruship. Even a Sikh writer does that in the case of Ajit Singh and Hathī Singh.<sup>52</sup> But, during the course of the eighteenth century, the doctrines of Gurū-Panth and Gurū-Granth were well established among the Khālṣa.<sup>53</sup>

## IV

The non-Sikh writers of the early eighteenth century took much greater notice of Banda Bahādur than that of Gurū Gobind Singh. This may safely be attributed to the political activities of Banda and his success in holding power for some time. Significantly, the first report mentions the *Khālṣa* of Gurū Gobind Singh rather than Banda Bahādur. When Wazir *Khān*, the *faujdar* of Sirhind, sent commanders with troops against the *Khālṣa* in the Jalandhar Doab, his commanders were defeated. The *Khālṣa* were hostile to Wazir *Khān* because he had killed the young sons of their Gurū. Disorders spread in his territories and he was obliged to stay at Sirhind. The factious *zamindars* began to plunder *parganas* in the name of the *Khālṣa*. It was rumoured that Gurū Gobind Singh himself was leading the *Khālṣa*. A later report refers to the defeat and death of Wazir *Khān* on 24 May 1710. The *Khālṣa* established their authority in Sirhind, and forbade the killing of animals.<sup>54</sup>

Muḥammad Qāsim, the earliest writer to give detail of Banda Bahādur's activities, based himself partly on what he had heard from close quarters and partly on what he had seen. Banda Bahādur is not mentioned by name. He is called 'Gurū' but he was a *bahrupiya* who resembled the Gurū and could, therefore, easily become an imposter. People responded to him as they would have responded to Gurū Gobind Singh to take revenge for the humiliations

inflicted on him. They were also in want of daily sustenance. The 'Gurū' obliged the peasants to submit, and plundered the travellers. Eventually, he defeated Wazīr Khān in a battle in which Sher Muḥammad and Khawāja Ali of Malerkotla were also killed. Muḥammad Qāsim's sympathies are obviously with Wazīr Khān and the Muslims in general. He underscores the atrocities of Banda Bahādur. Wazīr Khān's *peshkāṛ*, 'Sachadānand', was his special target because of his earlier acts of cruelty to the young sons of Gurū Gobind Singh. The city of Sirhind was destroyed. Some people were compelled to accept the Sikh faith. None was allowed to retain arms, horses, and other goods and chattel of chiefship. Bāz Singh was appointed as the *ṣūbadār* of Sirhind, and officers were appointed over the *parganas*. All territory from the river Sutlej up to Karnal passed under the government and control of Banda Bahādur. He established his headquarters at Mukhlispur near Sadhaura, and sent out commanders for further destruction and subjugation of territories. This description leaves no doubt that an independent state was sought to be established by Banda Bahādur.<sup>56</sup>

The news of Banda Bahādur's uprising encouraged other Sikhs to rise. A large gathering of Sikhs at Amritsar, where they used to meet annually at the time of Baisakhi, went on a rampage. Aslam Khān, the Mughal governor of Lahore, dared not move against them.<sup>57</sup> The city of Lahore remained safe but important *parganas* like Batala and Kalanaur were devastated. In due course Lahore was also threatened. The inaction of the governor induced the learned and pious Muslims to organize defence, and they were supported by Shaikhs, Saiyids, Afghans and Mughals. Some of the Paracha traders gave financial support to "the Holy War".<sup>58</sup> Aslam Khān felt constrained to send two commanders with 500 horse and foot to join the volunteers. The Sikhs took shelter in a fort, but its sustained siege obliged them to evacuate it in the darkness of night. The "army of Islam" returned victorious to Lahore. Some of its 'soldiers' were vile and mean enough to commit shameful acts upon the Hindus of the city. In another campaign against the Sikhs the peasants on the route to Kotla Begam, about fifty miles from Lahore, were plundered.<sup>59</sup> The campaign in all probability was unsuccessful. What is more important for us to note is that the Khālsa became active in the Bari Doab in 1710 when Banda was still engaged in the Sutlej-Yamuna Divide.<sup>60</sup>

In view of Banda Bahādur's uprising, Bahādur Shāh postponed the intended suppression of the Rajputs and moved directly towards Mukhlispur which was fortified by Banda as his

## Introduction

headquarters. Banda Bahādur was besieged; he defended the fort for two months; and then made his escape into the inaccessible hills to the chagrin of the Emperor. Bahādur Shāh moved towards Lahore.

In the reign of Farrukh Siyar (1713-19), Muḥammad Amīn Khān was sent from the court to support ‘Abdu’s Ṣamad Khān, now the governor of Lahore, for action against Banda Bahādur in the Jammu area. Banda was forced to retreat into the hills. Muḥammad Amīn Khān returned to the Imperial Court and ‘Abdu’s Ṣamad Khān to Lahore. A year later, Banda appeared in the upper Bari Doab and defeated Shaikh Muḥammad Dāim, the *faujdār* of Batala. The Emperor issued strict orders for Banda’s suppression. ‘Abdu’s Ṣamad Khān took the field against him with the support of a number of *faujdārs* and a few *zamīndārs*. Eventually, Banda was besieged in the *garhī* of Gurdaspura. Many of the Sikhs deserted him, and cut off their hair for safety. Muḥammad Qāsim was an eye witness to the sorties of the besieged. The Mughal commanders were so struck with fear that they prayed that Banda should take to flight so that their prestige was saved without risking their lives. The siege continued for three or four months. Wrathful *farmāns* were issued by Farrukh Siyar to ‘Abdu’s Ṣamad Khān. To reinforce him, Qamr’udin Khān Bahādur, son of Muḥammad Amīn Khān, was sent from the Imperial Court. After a further siege of over two months, which made Banda’s position utterly hopeless, he offered to surrender on the promise of safety. About 200 men came out with him and they were placed in the custody of *daroghas*. The fort was thoroughly plundered. Zakariyā Khān, the son of ‘Abdu’s Ṣamad Khān, escorted the prisoners to Delhi where they were executed. Banda Bahādur and his five or six years old son were the last to be executed near the holy shrine of Khwāja Bakhtyārūddin Kākī.

Muḥammad Qāsim’s resentment against Banda Bahādur and the Khālṣa is writ large on every page and he looks upon them as a threat not so much to the state as to Muslims. He uses harsh and contemptuous language for Banda and the Khālṣa and praises the Muslims who promoted the cause of Muslims and participated in ‘the holy war’. Nevertheless, there is hardly any doubt that Muḥammad Qāsim provides much useful information, particularly on the events of the years 1710, 1713, and 1715-16. He does not touch upon Banda’s renewed activity in the Sutlej-Yamuna Divide after the death of Bahādur Shāh early in 1712.

Mirzā Muḥammad’s *‘Ibartnāma* also contains derogatory

language for Banda Bahādur and the Sikhs but his account is even more important as a contemporary witness. On 23 December 1715, which marked the anniversary of Farrukh Siyar's coronation, the Emperor received the news of the capture of 'the accursed Gurū' (Banda Bahādur) along with more than 2000 Sikhs. The "victory of Islam" was celebrated for a whole month.

In 1709-10, we are told, an obscure man of dark design had appeared in the territory of Sirhind and proclaimed himself to be Gurū Gobind Singh. A large number of the Khāl̥sa gathered around him from all parts of the Punjab. He first attacked the *pargana* of Sadhaura because its *pīrzādas* had shown great enmity towards Gurū Gobind Singh. The Khāl̥sa in the Punjab also rose in revolt and penetrated the Jalandhar Doab. Banda Bahādur brought many *parganas* under his control and ordered a general massacre of Muslims. He sent his troops across the river Yamuna and himself marched towards Sirhind. Wazīr Khān came out to meet him with 12,000 horse and attained martyrdom. The city of Sirhind was sacked and the only Muslims who saved their lives were those who took refuge in Hindu homes.<sup>61</sup> Saharanpur was plundered by the troops sent across the Yamuna by Banda. Muslims began to leave the territories from Thanesar to the river Sutlej, which had come under Banda's control. On the other side of the Sutlej, Shams Khān Khweshgī, the *faujdār* of the Jalandhar Doab, defeated and killed the Sikhs in large numbers. Jalāl Khān Ruhela defeated the Sikhs in Saharanpur and Sardār Khān Rajput defeated the Sikh force moving from Thanesar to Delhi. Thus, the capital was saved. However, mosques and *dargāhs* were destroyed by the Sikhs in all their territories.<sup>62</sup>

Patching up an unsatisfactory arrangement with the Rajputs, Bahādur Shāh moved towards Sadhaura. The Sikhs began to retreat from *thānas* on his approach. They reinforced the Sikh forces under Banda Bahādur who showed defiance for two months and then fled into the hills. The fort of Sirhind was captured by Muḥammad Amīn Khān. Many Sikhs were slain. About three months later, in the beginning of 1711, Banda Bahādur appeared in the Bari Doab. He killed Shams Khān Khweshgī and spread terror in Batala and Kalanaur. The Sikhs sacked Aurangabad and Parsrur across the Ravi. Bahādur Shāh deputed Muḥammad Amīn Khān, Ghāzī Khān and Hamid Khān to suppress the renewed insurrection. It was not yet suppressed when the Emperor died early in 1712.

In the uncertainty that followed Bahādur Shāh's death, Muḥammad Amīn Khān retired from the Punjab and Banda Bahādur

## Introduction

reoccupied Sadhaura and built the fort of Lohgarh. After Jahāndār Shāh's accession, Muḥammad Amīn Khān was deputed once again to exterminate the Sikhs. The *faujdār* of Sirhind, Zainuddīn Aḥmad Khān, was ordered to support him. Sadhaura was besieged for some months. He was recalled when Jahāndār Shāh had to fight Farrukh Siyar. When the latter gained the throne, some leading Mughal commanders were sent with Muḥammad Amīn Khān to deal with Banda Bahādur. In the beginning of 1713 'Abdu's Ṣamad Khān also reached Sadhaura, having been appointed by Farrukh Siyar. Both Sadhaura and Lohgarh were captured in the beginning of 1714 but Banda escaped into the hills.

'Abdu's Ṣamad Khān was made the governor of Lahore. Banda Bahādur reappeared in the Bari Doab. He was besieged in Gurdaspura and the siege went on for a year. A number of battles took place but Banda failed to escape. He was obliged at last to surrender on the promise of safety. More than two thousand Sikhs were made prisoners along with Banda on 18 October 1715. In accordance with the imperial order they were sent to Delhi under the escort of Qamruddīn Khān, son of Muḥammad Amīn Khān, and Zakariyā Khān, son of 'Abdu's Ṣamad Khān. They reached Delhi on 11 March 1716. Their entry into the capital is described in some detail.

Mirzā Muḥammad saw the procession from the salt market to the imperial fort. There was no sign of humility and submission on the faces of the Sikhs. Most of them kept singing and reciting melodious verses. They attributed their defeat to fate and had no fear of death. They were kept in custody for some days before orders were given for their execution: On 16 March 1716 one hundred of them were beheaded at the *chabūtra-i kotwālī*. In a week's time all the Sikhs were beheaded in batches of one hundred. Muḥammad Mirzā makes no specific mention of the execution of Banda Bahādur.

Muḥammad Hādī Kāmwar Khān's *Tazkiratu's Salāṭīn Chaghatā* is remarkable for the precise dates it gives for the events he narrates. Banda Bahādur's rise to power in 1710 is briefly described. It is followed by details of the action taken by Bahādur Shāh and his commanders and *faujdārs* from 13 October to 12 December 1710 against Banda and the Khālsa. For the year 1711, from 24 March to 31 August, only a few incidents are mentioned. There is nothing about the Sikhs in the year 1712. In 1713, from 9 July to 10 October, only two incidents are mentioned. There is nothing for the year 1714 either. Then, an account of the last phase

of Banda Bahādur's career from 21 March 1715 to 20 June 1716 is given. Thus, Kāmwar Khān's information relates largely to the first and the last phase of Banda's political activity. For four years from 1711 to 1714 there is very little information.

This does not mean, however, that the information for the years 1711 and 1713 is not valuable. Bahādur Shāh marched from Lohgarh towards Lahore on 24 March 1711 after Rāja Bhūp Prakash of Nahan was ordered to be put in the iron cage meant for Banda, and sent to Delhi as a prisoner. The Rāja was supposed to have connived with Banda in his flight through his territory. The Rāja's mother offered over thirty Sikhs to secure her son's release. They were all executed, but the Emperor made Banda's capture the condition of the Rāja's release. On 5 June 1711, it was reported that Shams Khān and his brother were killed in a battle with the Sikhs; 'Isā Khān was appointed as the deputy-*faujdār* of the Jalandhar Doab. On 15 June it was reported to the Emperor that Muḥammad Amin Khān had defeated Banda near Parsrur but he had escaped into the Jammu hills. On 31 August it was reported that Ghāzī Khān had abandoned Banda's pursuit without imperial orders. Therefore his arrest and imprisonment in the fort of Lahore was ordered by the Emperor. There is nothing more about Banda in the reign of Bahādur Shāh, but all this information has its own peculiar value.

On 9 July 1713, it was reported to the new Emperor that 'Abdu's Ṣamad Khān and Aḥmad Khān, a *zamīndār*, had fought an indecisive battle with the Sikhs on 3 July. On 10 October it was reported that the Khālsa had fled from Sadhaura. Obviously, Banda had re-occupied some territory in the area around Lohgarh and Sadhaura. Indeed, in 1712-13 he had remained active in the Sutlej-Yamuna Divide. Dislodged from there, he became active again in the Bari Doab.

Kāmwar Khān's account of the first campaign (1710-11) against Banda Bahādur is the most detailed. He underscores "the base and lowly castes" of Banda's followers who were mostly sweepers, tanners and *banjāras*. He highlights Banda's atrocities, especially the slaughter of Muslims and destruction of mosques and tombs. The plunder of Sirhind amounted to more than two crores of rupees. Before the arrival of Bahādur Shāh, Shamsuddīn Khān in the Jalandhar Doab and Fīroz Khān Mewati in the Karnal area had defeated the Sikhs. The Emperor came with nearly 100,000 cavalry, infantry and artillery. Muḥammad Amin Khān was sent to recover Sirhind, and the Imperial Camp marched towards Sadhaura.

## Introduction

Detached Sikh forces were defeated in a few battles before the assault on Lohgarh. The imperial forces moved cautiously to capture the hill tops under the control of Banda and his commanders. A terrifying sound at mid-night served as the signal for the final defeat of the Sikhs: they had filled a wooden gun with powder, exploded it, and fled. All the wealth, goods, women and children, horses and camels of the Sikhs fell into the hands of the victorious army. Three pieces of cannon, five elephants, seventeen gun-carts, one canopy, and a few silver sticks of Banda were brought before the Emperor. Nearly twenty lacs of rupees, including gold coins (*ashrafis*), were collected from Lohgarh. Twelve of Banda's companions, led by a tobacco-seller named Gulāba, were executed by the *kotwāl*. But Banda had escaped. Bahādur Shāh was not happy over the victory.

In the last phase, 'Abdu'sh Şamad Khān was supported by some Mughal nobles from Delhi and the vassal chiefs of the empire to lay siege to Gurdaspur in April 1715. It ended early in December when Banda offered to surrender on the promise of safety. The report of his fall reached Farrukh Siyar on 11 December 1715 when he was celebrating the anniversary of his victory over Jahandar Shāh. He was all the more joyous and merrier to receive the news. Qamruddīn Khān and Zakariyā Khān escorted Banda and his companions to Delhi, reaching there on 11 March 1716. Apart from some gold ornaments and coins of gold and silver, which were deposited in the Imperial Treasury, the swords, shields, bows, muskets, daggers, and knives recovered from the Sikhs were deposited in the fort. The first batch of Sikhs was executed on 21 March 1716. Banda was executed after much torture on 20 June near the *mazār* of Khawāja Qutbuddin along with his three-year old son and twenty-six of his companions.

The extracts from Khafī Khān's Muntakhabu'l Lubāb reinforce Kāmwar Khān's account of Bahādur Shāh's assault on Banda's forces at Lohgarh, and the entry and execution of Banda and his companions at Delhi. The followers of Banda raised the cry of "Fateh Darshan"<sup>63</sup> and "Sachchā Bādschāh"<sup>64</sup> at the time of the battle. The Khatri of the Punjab were colluding with Banda and the Jats were supporting him. The majority of Banda's followers were foot-soldiers. They did not hesitate to die in battle. The factor of greed was added to their faith. Their spirit of sacrifice, and their achievement through it, was attributed by the common people to magic and sorcery.

The procession of Banda and his companions entering Delhi is graphically described by Khafī Khān. They were executed

in batches of two hundred or three hundred every day. Some of the Khatris of Delhi offered money to Muḥammad Amin Khān to save Banda's life. During the execution, the mother of one youth pleaded his innocence and the Emperor ordered his release. But her son cried out that she was telling a lie and that he should be executed so that he may join his companions. Banda himself said that he was a divine instrument of punishment for the excesses of his enemies. But now he was being punished for his own atrocities.

Muḥammad Shafī' Wārid's *Mir'āt-i Wāridāt* attributes the uprising of Banda Bahādur to the assassination of Gurū Gobind Singh at the hands of an Afghan. The leaders of the community entrusted to a person who resembled Gurū Gobind Singh in appearance the task of leading the Sikhs in their bid for independent rule. Letters were sent to the *zamīndārs* that Gurū Gobind Singh's soul had entered the leader's body.<sup>65</sup> When he appeared suddenly at Kharkhoda, its *zamīndārs* flocked to him in the belief that he was Gurū Gobind Singh. After the conquest of Sirhind, Banda ordered that both Hindus and Muslims who became enrolled as Sikhs should take their meals together to obviate the distinction of the lowly and the well-born. Consequently a pauper was made equal to a prince.<sup>66</sup> With the help of the Sikhs who joined him from all parts of the country, he built a fort near Sadhaura and made it the headquarters of his administration. Not only Banda himself, but also the administrators appointed by him belonged to lowly positions, including that of a sweeper or a cobbler.<sup>67</sup>

The information on Banda Bahādur in these sources is uneven, somewhat repetitive, and occasionally contradictory in detail, but it remains more valuable than all the other known evidence. In the light of this information the later Sikh sources, like the *Bansāvalīnāma* of Kesar Singh Chhibber and the *Panth Prakāsh* of Ratan Singh Bhangū, begin to make better sense.<sup>68</sup> However, they also provide additional information. Bhangū clearly states that Banda started a new *panth*, which alienated him from the staunch followers of Gurū Gobind Singh.<sup>69</sup> Chhibber states that many people regarded Banda Bahādur as the eleventh *Pātshāhi* (Gurū).<sup>70</sup> Both Bhangū and Chhibber state that Banda established an independent rule, with government and administration of his own. Bhangū states that Banda's aspiration to become a sovereign ruler was one more reason for the alienation of the Tat Khālsa who believed that Gurū Gobind Singh had bestowed rulership upon them.<sup>71</sup>

Neither Chhibber nor Bhangū refers to any coin struck



## Introduction

by Banda Bahādur. The non-Sikh sources refer to coins as a part of the booty but do not state whether these were Mughal coins or coins struck by Banda Bahādur. Ganda Singh, basing himself on the *Furrukḥ-Siyar Nāmāh* and the *Ḥaḍīqatu'l Aqālīm*, gives the Persian inscription on the coin struck by Banda which he translates as: "Struck coin in the two worlds, by the grace of the True Lord. Victory to Gobind Singh, the King of Kings; The sword of Nānak is the grāntor of desires." The inscription on the seal used by Banda on his orders bore a Persian inscription that is translated into English as: 'Kettle (the means to feed the poor), Sword (the power to protect the weak and the helpless), Victory and Unhesitating Patronage (are) obtained from Nānak Gurū Gobind Singh'.<sup>72</sup> Both these inscriptions reveal that Banda did claim sovereignty for the state he established, or tried to establish, but not in his own name. Sovereignty was believed to be derived from Gurū Nānak, and through the grace of God.<sup>73</sup>

## V

The evidence of non-Sikh sources on the resurgence of the *Khālṣa*, like their evidence on Banda Bahādur, is extremely valuable. Understandably, these sources are silent about the post-Banda phase until the Sikhs reappear on the political scene rather obtrusively. There is nothing about their activity before the governorship of Mu'īnu'l Mulk. Till 1758-59 then, only Ṭahmās *Khān* relates some important events. From 1758-59 to 1764-65, Ṭahmās *Khān*'s evidence overlaps with that of the reports of *Vakīls* in Delhi and the *Jangnāma* of Qāzī Nur Muḥammad. The collective evidence of these sources covers all the important stages from about 1750 to 1765 with only one important omission — the incursion of the Marathas into the Punjab and their politico-administrative arrangements in 1758-59.

According to Ṭahmās *Khān*, Mu'īnu'l Mulk made special preparations to suppress the Sikhs and offered incentives to those who might join his plan of suppression and persecution. This piece of evidence carries the implication that the Sikhs had become a serious menace by the time Mu'īnu'l Mulk took over the governorship of Lahore. Aḥmad Shah's second invasion came as an interruption. After his departure, the Sikhs raised disturbance even in the Batala area. In fact, a pitched battle was fought near Amritsar. Mu'īnu'l Mulk died in 1753 without suppressing the Sikhs. In the time of Mughlānī Begam, Qāsim *Khān* marched towards Patti but met opposition from the Sikhs and, eventually, tried

unsuccessfully to forge an understanding with them. Failing in his objective of reaching Patti, he returned to Lahore. Ṭahmās Khān knew about these events as they were taking place not far from the provincial capital. Probably, similar incidents took place elsewhere in the province.

In 1757, Jahān Khān, the Afghan commander, fought a pitched battle with the Sikhs near Amritsar. He was on the verge of defeat when Hājī ‘Aṭā Khān came to his aid with the royal army. Sometime later, Jahān Khān sent special troops to deal with a Sikh leader. Their harshness obliged him to retire to some secret place. The troops returned empty-handed. “From that moment”, says Ṭahmās, “the shape of administration, which in that country had been in good order, was disrupted, and from every side tumult and rebellion began to be raised by the Sikhs. Wherever the (Afghan) army went, it came back defeated, till things came to such a pass that the environs of the city of Lahore were affected. Every night in bodies of a thousand, the Sikhs attacked the city and sacked the quarters outside the city wall. No one came out of the city to disperse or stop them.”

In 1757-58, thus, the Afghan administration of the province was thrown into disorder.<sup>74</sup>

In 1760, when Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī and the Marathas were preparing for a decisive battle, Rustam Khān Bangash, who had been appointed by Aḥmad Shāh to the Chahār-Maḥal (Sialkot, Gujrat, Pasrur and Aurangabad), marched against the Sikhs but only to be captured. According to Ṭahmās, “the Sikhs and the *zamīndārs*” assembled at this time were nearly 20,000 strong. Rustam Khān had to promise a heavy ransom. A few days later, 40,000 Sikhs marched upon Sialkot, and Rustam Khān paid 22,000 rupees to the Sikhs through the Rāja of Jammu to obtain his release. After the battle of Panipat, Khawāja ‘Abd Khān, the new Afghan governor of Lahore, marched against Charhat Singh but only to be defeated by the combined forces of the Sikhs. He fled back to Lahore. The Afridi Afghans, Sa‘ādat Khān and Ṣādiq Khān, who had been appointed to the Jalandhar Doab, were also defeated by the Sikhs and thrown out. Thus, “from the Attock river to the river of Sirhind” the Sikhs acquired dominance and possession.

Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī now came specifically to suppress the Sikhs. He killed thousands of them in the action known as the Great Carnage in Sikh sources. Ṭahmās, who was an eye witness, estimated that about 25,000 Sikhs were slain.<sup>75</sup> But Ṭahmās had lived through the struggle for over a decade and had the gut feeling

## Introduction

that the Sikhs would rise again in a matter of months. His 'reason' told him that all the routes would be closed again and disorders would arise. After Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī's departure from Lahore in the summer of 1762, disorders arose "in the entire country in his possession". Ṭahmās Khān congratulated himself on his foresight. Early in 1764, he heard the news in Delhi that the Sikhs had killed Zain Khān, the Afghan commandant and governor of Sirhind, in a battle and sacked the city. From that time onwards, the Sikhs crossed the Yamuna every year to plunder the territory of Najib Khān. Ṭahmās does not say so explicitly, but the Sarkar of Sirhind had been occupied by the Sikhs.

The Reports sent out from Delhi to the Maratha courts, and a few possibly to Hyderabad, provide some new and very significant information. There are fifteen reports in all. The first is undated, and the last is dated 1765. Of the remaining thirteen, there is one each for 1759, 1760 and 1761, and five each for 1763 and 1764. We know that the Marathas were actively interested in the Punjab in 1758-59 and they were eliminated from its practical politics at least for over a decade after their defeat at Panipat in 1761. The parties now left in the field were the Afghans and the Sikhs. Therefore, the reports of 1763-64 present a crucial kind of evidence on the process through which the Sikhs emerged as rulers. We know that they declared their sovereign status by striking a coin at Lahore in 1765.

The first report refers to good relations between Ādīna Beg Khān, presumably the governor of Lahore on behalf of the Marathas, and the Sikhs; their plan was to obstruct the Delhi Wazīr in his march from Sirhind to Lahore. Early in 1759 the Sikhs were plundering the environs of Lahore, reducing its dwindling population to a state of starvation. Ādīna Beg's successor, Mir Ḥasan 'Alī Khān, was negotiating terms of peace and cooperation with the Sikh leaders. According to the report of October 1760, the Sikhs established their control over Lahore but proclaimed the authority of Bhāu Sāhib, offering a prayer (*ardās*) for his victory and the defeat of Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī. Incidentally, the controversial coin of Jassa Singh is said to have been struck at this time. The territories of the province of Lahore, including the Jalandhar Doab, were occupied by the Sikhs and they were making collections. According to one estimate their cavalry numbered 40,000 to 50,000. In the report of May-June 1761, Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī is said to be returning to Afghanistan, having appointed Sarbuland Khān as his governor at Lahore and Sa'ādat Khān Afrīdī as the *faujdār* of the Jalandhar

Doab. The Sikhs, coming down from the hills, laid siege to Jalandhar. They were collecting revenues from the countryside and Sa'adat Khān had no power to contend with them.

There is no reference to 'the great carnage' of 1762. However, when Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī was returning to Afghanistan early in March 1763, he suffered humiliation at the hands of the Sikh chiefs who took possession of the *maḥals* of Sialkot and Gujarat up to the river Jhelum. Rāja Ghammand Chand of Kangra, who had been given charge of the Jalandhar Doab, retired into the hills out of fear, leaving his officials behind. The Sikh chiefs met at Chak Gurū (Amritsar) for consultations at the time of Baisakhi for occupation of territories. Khawāja 'Ubaid Ullāh, the Afghan governor at Lahore, with Kābulī Mal as the Diwan, was negotiating terms with them. Zain Khān, the Afghan administrator at Sirhind, was not in a position to oppose the Sikhs. The calamity of Abdālī had gone, says the report, but the calamity of the Sikhs has now arisen.<sup>76</sup>

The Sikh chiefs wrote to Shujā'uddaula and Najibuddaula that they had expelled Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī from the province of Lahore as 'servants' of the Mughal court, incurring large expenditure in gathering troops. Therefore, the amount of money stipulated to be paid to Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī should now be paid to them. They go on to add that if this was not done they would not be responsible for the action of the Sikh forces which were likely then to attack the capital. This is hardly the language of "servants". Zain Khān moved out of Sirhind with his five thousand cavalry and five thousand infantry, not to oppose the Sikhs but to obviate their attack on Sirhind.

In July 1763 it is reported that Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī had sent Jahān Khān as the governor of Lahore to quell the Sikhs. The Sikh chiefs were preparing to meet at Amritsar for *gurmata* to coordinate action.<sup>77</sup> Jassa Singh (Ahluwalia) and others from the Bari Doab, and Charhat Singh from the other side of the river of Jhelum were to participate in the proceedings. Shujā'uddaula's envoy met Jassa Singh with his letter and a robe of honour from the Emperor. Jassa Singh replied that he would place the 'elevated orders' before the Sikh chiefs at Amritsar where they would meet for consultations. Meanwhile, Zain Khān bound himself to pay three lacs of rupees to Jassa Singh through the mediacy of Ālā Singh (of Patiala) whose force was collecting revenues on behalf of Zain Khān.

In the report of October 1763, Jahān Khān is said to have crossed the Indus and encamped at Hasan Abdal, waiting for the

## Introduction

Shāh's arrival. Charhat Singh and other chiefs were encamped on the Jhelum to oppose Jahān Khān. Jassa Singh was collecting revenues in the Jalandhar Doab and another force had raised disturbance in the neighbourhood of Lahore. A large number of Sikhs gathered at Amritsar and started construction work, employing some Durrani as labourers.<sup>78</sup>

Early in 1764 Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī crossed the Indus. Charhat Singh, Thoka Singh (Jassa Singh Ramgarhia) and others were in the *maḥals* of Sialkot and Gujarat. Jassa Singh (Ahluwalia) and others had laid siege to Sirhind which was being defended by Zain Khān's deputy. Sirhind eventually was sacked and plundered. Zain Khān was killed in a battle that followed and his goods and money worth fourteen to fifteen lacs were siezed. Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī marched to Hasan Abdal and Rawalpindi, along with his commanders Shāh Walī Khān, Shāh Pasand Khān, Jahān Khān and others. The Sikhs gathered at Amritsar and resolved to attack the Shāh. Aḥmad Shāh halted at Rohtasgarh before crossing the Jhelum. The Sikhs divided their forces into two or three divisions with the idea of giving battle to him. He was on the other side of the Chenab with nearly 40,000 horse and the Sikhs were on this side of the river with more than 100,000 horse and foot. The Shāh crossed the river to fight a decisive battle. Among the Sikhs were Charhat Singh, Harī Singh (Bhangī), Thoka (Jassa Singh Ramgarhia) and others. After much slaughter on both sides, the Afghan troops suffered defeat. Many of them who missed the ford in their flight were drowned, and Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī himself put his horse into the river. Troop after troop crossed the river and fled pellmell. It was rumoured that the Abdālī ruler had been killed.

Meanwhile, Jassa Singh (Ahluwalia) sacked and plundered some *maḥals* of the Yamuna Doab and recrossed the Yamuna to collect tribute from the *Zamīndār* of Kunjpura. Charhat Singh, Harī Singh, Thoka (Jassa Singh Ramgarhia) and other Sikh chiefs came to Amritsar for Holi, and then marched back to establish their posts at various places. Their intention was to occupy the Pathohar. Significantly, they sent messengers to the Afghan governors of Multan and Kashmir, and to *Zamīndārs*, to demand the money they used to pay to Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī.

The process of territorial occupation was not always smooth. When Harī Singh (Bhangī) and his men went to occupy Lahore, Charhat Singh's men also reached there. Two hundred persons were wounded and killed on both sides in the conflict that ensued. When peace was arranged, Charhat Singh's men entered

the city and its residents were forced by Kābulī Mal to collect large sums of money to be paid to Charhat Singh.<sup>79</sup>

According to the report of June 1764, a battle had taken place between Charhat Singh and the Gakkhar Zamīndārs of the upper Sindh Sagar Doab. The Gakkhars were defeated and Charhat Singh had settled some *maḥals*. Hari Singh Bhangī appointed Wali Muḥammad Khān as the deputy governor of the province of Multan. Kābulī Mal was paying tax-money to Hari Singh Bhangī. The Rāja of Jammu sent a stipulated amount of money to the Sikh chiefs. Their combined forces were plundering villages in the *maḥals* of Ambala, Shahabad, and Kunjpura. Their intention was to march into the Ganga Yamuna Doab. Ālā Singh at Patiala, who was preparing to fight the Sikhs, actually joined them. But he was asked to pay money.

The report of November 1764, states that Charhat Singh, Hari Singh, Sukha Singh, Nihal Singh, Gujjar Singh and others have proceeded towards Gujarat with 60,000 horse, after their visit to Amritsar. The two Jassa Singhs, Khushhāl Singh, Kardār Singh and others had come to the Jalandhar Doab. Jahān Khān was gathering troops in Kabul but the Afghans were much awed by the Sikhs. Jawāhar Singh of Bharatpur was supported by the Sikhs.

In March 1765 it is reported that Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī was in the Jammu region where his camp had been raided by a Sikh force. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and others had collected thirteen lacs of rupees from Jawāhar Singh as the balance due from him. Aḥmad Shāh reached Jalandhar, crossed the river Sutlej, and encamped near Sirhind. The men he left behind in the Jalandhar Doab deserted their posts to join him for safety. Nothing was achieved in quelling the Sikhs. Ālā Singh of Patiala sent 40,000 rupees to the Shāh and it was rumoured that he would settle for an annual tribute of three lacs of rupees. The Sikh chiefs did not allow the men of Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī to establish *thānas* anywhere and he moved from place to place with his whole army. The Sikh troops did not engage the Afghan army in a close battle. The Shāh too was unable to chastise them. There was no possibility of a settlement. Jassa Singh and others told Ālā Singh not to accept the Abdālī's suzerainty; he replies that he was 'a *zamīndār*' and, therefore, could not refuse to submit to his authority. But the Sikh chiefs could confront Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī 'on equal terms'.<sup>80</sup>

Qāzī Nūr Muḥammad's *Jangnāma* presents Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī's campaign of 1764-65 in the Punjab, or at least the participation of Nāṣir Khān of Qalat in that campaign on his own

initiative, as a holy war. The Sikhs had not only come to dominate Multan and Lahore, they had also overthrown the religious practices of Islam.<sup>81</sup> During the campaign, Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī was keen to destroy the Chak (Amritsar) once again. He marched for three days and nights to arrive there. Only a few Sikhs had stayed back inside the central enclosure with the idea of making a deliberate sacrifice for the Gurū. Thirty in all, they showed no dread of death, and died fighting. From a Sikh source we know that the leader of these Sikhs was Gurbakhsh Singh, a celebrated martyr.<sup>82</sup>

Qāzī Nūr Muḥammad praises the Sikhs for their courage and valour, their martial prowess, and their ethics in war. They were adept in the use of the sword, the spear, and the bow. They were exceptionally skilful in the use of the musket, as if it were their own invention. Thirty of them could engage thirty thousand men in battle, using hit-and-run tactics to scatter the enemy forces. They did not pursue a fugitive; they did not plunder women; and there was no adultery among them. The Singhs of Gurū Gobind Singh, the last successor of Gurū Nānak who had shown a separate path to the Sikhs, were not from amongst the Hindus. They had 'a distinct religion of their own.'<sup>83</sup>

Many of the chiefs who had occupied territories in the sarkār of Sirhind, the provinces of Lahore and Multan, and in the Derajat are named by Qāzī Nūr Muḥammad: Jhanda Singh Bhangī, Harī Singh Bhangī, Gujjar Singh Bhangī, Lehna Singh Bhangī, Charhat Singh Sukerchakia, Jai Singh Kanhiya, Jassa Singh Kalal (Ahluwalia), Jassa Singh Rāmgarhia, Sūba Singh, Sobha Singh, Natha Singh, and Karam Singh, among others. Qāzī Nūr Muḥammad's evidence leaves no doubt whatever that the Sikhs were *de facto* rulers of the Punjab before they struck the Sikh coin at Lahore in 1765.

## VI

The last two works in this selection were actually meant for the East India Company, or the British, as the new rulers of India. Ghulām 'Alī Khān wrote on the eighteenth-century Awadh for the British Resident John Bailie whom he had met in 1807. James Skinner, who rose to be a Lieutenant-Colonel in the British Royal Army, had served under the French Generals of the Marathas in 1796-1803 and then under Lord Lake, which made him somewhat familiar with the Sikhs and their chiefs. In fact his *Tashrīḥu'l Aqwām* was completed at Hansi in 1825.

Ghulam 'Alī Khān's *'Imādu's Sa'ādat* contains a short account of the genesis of the Sikhs. He refers to the founder of the community, Gurū Nānak, as a renunciant who attained to "full spiritual knowledge in the Hindu way". His gnosticism was evident from his compositions.

Gurū Nānak's followers were of two kinds: the *Khālśa* who kept uncut hair, and the *Khulāṣa* who were beardless.<sup>84</sup> However, only one or two of the latter category were found 'in a thousand, or rather ten thousand', Sikhs. In other words, the *Khālśa* component was overwhelmingly predominant. Ghulam 'Alī Khān underscores the willingness of the Sikhs to die for their Gurū. Such orders were actually issued by some of the successors of Gurū Nānak, to their later regret.<sup>85</sup>

In all there were ten Gurus from Gurū Nānak to Gurū Gobind Singh. Among them, however, is placed Bhagat Bhagwān, the son of a Muslim carpenter.<sup>86</sup> The Sikhs believed that the ten spiritual masters of the Sikhs presented a parallel to the ten Mughal Emperors up to Muḥammad Shāh as masters of the temporal world. There was indeed a saying among the Sikhs: '*das Bābe de, das Bābar de*'.<sup>87</sup> Ghulam 'Alī Khān goes on to give a brief description of Suthra-Shāhis, the followers of Suthra who was a disciple of Gurū Gobind Singh.<sup>88</sup>

For Ghulam 'Alī Khān, the Sikhs had become completely a political community from the time of Gurū Gobind Singh. The beginning was made in the time of Gurū Tegh Bahādur.<sup>89</sup> By the early nineteenth century they had come into possession of the entire country from the river Indus to the river Sutlej, up to Multan,<sup>90</sup> and from the banks of the Sutlej up to Karnal outside the Punjab.<sup>91</sup> The leaders of the Sikhs belonged mostly to the meaner classes, such as carpenters, leather-workers and Jats.<sup>92</sup> They referred to their armies as the army of Bābā Nānak,<sup>93</sup> and demanded tribute for the sacred food called *karāh*.<sup>94</sup> They were willing to compromise on the amount of ransom. Their army, called *Dal*, consisted of about two lacs of horsemen. Some of the Sikh soldiers were strong enough to kill a good horse with a kick. Their musket could pick a man nine hundred steps away. Each of them could cover two hundred *kurohs* at one stretch.

The proof of the effectiveness of the Sikh sword was the success of the Sikhs against the Durrānīs who were regarded as the best fighters. After Mu'īnu'l Mulk's death and Ādīna Beg Khān's period of regime at Lahore, Prince Timūr Shāh had begun to hold court at Lahore as the deputy of his father, Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī. To



## Introduction

all appearances the Sikhs were subservient to him but inwardly they harboured hostility towards him. If a few Sikh chiefs professed to be loyal, a few others kept the market of disturbance warm. Neither Timūr Shāh nor Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī succeeded in containing them.<sup>95</sup>

Ghulām ‘Alī Khān defines ‘Punjab’ as the country between five rivers. He names Sutlej, Beas, Ravi, Chenab and Jhelum, leaving out the Indus. Probably, he was misled by the word ‘*panj-āb*’ to come up with an arbitrary definition. Till the time of Ghulam ‘Alī Khān the Punjab was generally taken to mean the former province of Lahore which was also known as the Punjab.<sup>96</sup> There were millions of Sikhs in the Punjab, the number having been swelled by yogurt-sellers, confectioners, fodder-vendors, grain-sellers, barbers, and washermen.<sup>97</sup> Groups of Sikhs were found in the whole of Hindustan from Delhi to Calcutta, and even in Haidarabad and Chennai. Only a few of them were well-born. They were mostly the market people. The Sikhs kept uncut hair, used “*Wāh Gurū dī fateh*” as their form of greeting, and interdined with one another. They were hostile to *hookah*-smokers but they were addicted to hemp (*bhang*).<sup>98</sup>

On the whole, Ghulām ‘Alī Khān is highly selective in his presentation of the past and present state of the Sikh community. The accuracy or inaccuracy of his information depended on the character of the source of his information, mostly oral. But he also relied on his observation. The most interesting and useful part of his account of the Sikhs is based on his personal observation in the late eighteenth or the early nineteenth century. In other words, not his image of the past but his picture of the present is really useful to the historian of the Sikhs.

James Skinner equates the Sikhs with the followers of Gurū Gobind Singh who belonged to “the family of Bābā Nānak”: The Sikhs used to follow the way of the mendicants before Gurū Gobind Singh but they became “men of state and government” from his times. Along with his spiritual position, he attained the position of a Rāja, and had the sermon and coins contain his name, which were still current in the Punjab. The coins current in the Punjab did contain the name of Gurū Gobind Singh but he never struck any coin. As we noticed earlier, Banda Bahādur struck a coin which contained the name of Gurū Gobind Singh, and the inscription on his seal also contained Gurū Gobind Singh’s name. The coins current in the Punjab, known as Gobind Shāhī and Nānak Shāhī, bore both the inscriptions used by Banda. This could easily mislead Skinner to believe that Gurū Gobind Singh had struck coins in his name.

The reference to sermon (*khutba*) is merely figurative to imply declaration of sovereignty.

Skinner's explanation of how the Sikhs came to keep uncut hair comes from a source far removed from the Sikh tradition. Gurū Gobind Singh worshipped at the shrine of Nainā Devi<sup>99</sup> for one year and did not cut the hair of his head, arm-pits and pubes. He returned to his own place with the same appearance and instructed his followers to follow the same practice. Equating the Khālśa with the Sikhs, Skinner states that Gurū Gobind Singh gave "the name Sikh" to his religion. The purpose for which the Gurū worshipped the goddess was "the banishment of Muslims".<sup>100</sup>

The Sikhs were divided into two components: the ordinary Sikhs and the Akalis. The latter put on blue attire which Gurū Gobind Singh used to wear in the time of battle. They were particularly courageous and warlike. But they were not well-versed in fighting with the sword, and did not perform well in close fighting. They harboured bitter hostility against the Muslim community and regarded it meritorious to kill Muslims.<sup>101</sup>

All Sikhs were brave and followed the profession of soldiery.<sup>102</sup> They were without peer in the art of musketry and mobile warfare.<sup>103</sup> Most of the ordinary Sikhs wore blue turbans, and none wore red.<sup>104</sup> The wearing of *kachhchha* (short breeches) was very common among them.<sup>105</sup> They avoided smoking as much as the razor, and they did not eat *halāl* but *jhatka* meat.<sup>106</sup> They did not eat beef but ate the meat of other animals and birds, including the wild pig.<sup>107</sup> They consumed liquor and did not abstain from anything.<sup>108</sup> Anyone from any caste, whether Brahman or sweeper, could join their faith. There were no distinctions among them in eating and drinking.<sup>109</sup>

The Sikhs glorified and praised God. They did not believe in anyone except their own Master. Their worship consisted of reading his verses which they recited with song and music. They worshipped the *Bānī* of their Master. Rather vaguely, Skinner appears to refer to the belief of the Khālśa in the Gurus and the Granth.<sup>110</sup>

## VII

The non-Sikh sources of Sikh history selected for this volume contain some information which is not to be found in Sikh sources. Similarly, the Sikh sources contain some information which is not there in these non-Sikh sources. Then, there is some information that is common to both, or which is supplementary or

## Introduction

complementary. Thus, the Sikh and non-Sikh evidence is mutually illuminating.

Only a few of our authors appear to have used the work of their predecessors. A considerable portion of what they say came from sources distant in space or time, whether Sikh or non-Sikh. But they heard from close quarters too. Furthermore, their information was often based on personal observation or experience. Every work is not necessarily even in terms of its reliability. The official documents have a unique significance, followed closely by semi-official contemporary reports. The collective evidence of the selections is peculiarly important for chronology and political history, especially for the period of Gurū Arjan and Gurū Hargobind, the post-Khālsa phase of Gurū Gobind Singh's life, the political activity of Banda Bahādur, and the resurgence of Sikh political power from 1758 to 1765.

Many of the writers tend to assume that the Sikh movement before Gurū Gobind Singh was pacifist and that it was made militant primarily by him. This stereotype was popularized by the early British writers who gave preference to Persian sources for various reasons. However, the Sikh sources do not present a clean rupture between the early Sikh movement and the Khālsa, though the Sikh sources too emphasize the importance of the institution of the Khālsa. Whereas the Sikh writers were familiar with the doctrines and institutions of the Sikhs, most of the non-Sikh writers were more interested in the external manifestation of their intentions and purposes.

Gurū Nānak is often presented as a mystic, whether Hindu or Muslim. However, a distinct identity was seen emerging under his successors, particularly after the institution of the Khālsa. The non-Sikh sources say hardly anything about the institution of the Khālsa itself. Their explanation of how the Sikhs came to keep uncut hair is not based on any empirical evidence. A few of them refer to the removal of Masands. Nearly all the writers treat the Khālsa as by far the most dominant component of the Sikh community, if not the only component. The relative egalitarianism of the Sikhs in religious, social and political spheres is emphasized in the non-Sikh sources. The *gurmata* is mentioned, but not the doctrine of Gurū-Panth. The Sikh scripture is mentioned, but not the doctrine of Gurū-Granth.

The Sikh community is not a monolithic whole in the collective evidence of the non-Sikh sources. Apart from the difference between the Sikhs and the Khālsa, and between the Khālsa

and the Akalis, some other internal differences, and even tensions, are mentioned. The Sikh sources confirm the observations of the outsiders. If the Sikh sources are indispensable for the Sikh self-image, the non-Sikh sources enable us to see how others looked upon the Sikhs. In both cases, we come upon multiple images and a variety of attitudes towards the Sikhs and their past. Each work has to be seen, therefore, as a whole and in conjunction with other sources, both non-Sikh and Sikh, for proper and meaningful use as evidence. The important question to ask is not "who says what" but "what does it mean?"

### Notes

For publication details of works cited in these notes see References on page 47.

- <sup>1</sup> The terms used in the *Tuzuk* are *siyāsat* and *yāsā*, which do suggest capital punishment. Was this punishment to be inflicted without shedding the blood of Gurū Arjan who was a religious leader even in Jahāngīr's eyes?
- <sup>2</sup> Bhangū, 265-66.
- <sup>3</sup> Chhibber, 45-46, 54-55 & 65.
- <sup>4</sup> The evidence of the *Dabistān* reinforces the suggestive evidence of Bhāi Gurdās who was acutely conscious of the change after the martyrdom of Gurū Arjan. As his opponents pointed out, Gurū Hargobind was different from his predecessors. Formerly, the Emperors used to visit the Gurūs, but now Gurū Hargobind was imprisoned in a fort by the Emperor. Gurū Hargobind kept dogs for hunting and preferred the company of persons who presented a contrast to the old Sikhs. Bhai Gurdas adds that the true Sikhs were still devoted to him, knowing that he was silently bearing an unbearable burden. He was leading others on a path that was sharp like the edge of the double-edged sword. Bhai Gurdas, XXIV, 20; XXVI, 24.
- <sup>5</sup> Bhai Gurdas, XIII, 25. The word *maranka* in the text could be *manmukh* (self-centred), as suggested by Ganda Singh. It could also be *murakh* (ignoramus) which too occurs prominently in the *Vārs* of Bhai Gurdas. In the *Bachittar Nāṭak* the wise look at the Gurus as one and the fool looks upon them as different.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid, XX, 1 & 2.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid, XXXVI, especially 1-8. According to Kesar Singh Chhibber, Gurū Arjan had used the word *mīnā* for Prithi Chand when he posed to be innocent about his own misdeed, and the name stuck to him, his descendants, and their followers. Chhibber, 49 & 50. For cleavage in the Panth of Gurū Nānak, Grewal, 39-47.
- <sup>8</sup> Bhāi Gurdās, I, 17; XII, 5; XX, 4 & 21.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid, III, 4; VIII, 20; XXXII, 2.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid, XVI, 20; XVIII, 14; XIX, 19; XXVIII, 22.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid, XXVII, 6, 12, 16, 17; XXVIII, 2.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid, VI, 4; vii, 18.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid, XXIV, 11.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid, V, 13; VI, 2, 13; X, 5; XV, 21; XVIII, 14; XXIII, 19.
- <sup>15</sup> Kesar Singh Chhibber dwells on the martial prowess of Gurū

## Introduction

Hargobind. Chhibber, 71. Ratan Singh Bhangu says that Gurū Hargobind demonstrated *mīrī* as well as *pīrī*: he took up the sword, killed Painda, Lalla and Kambhar, and defeated the armies of Shāh Jahān. Bhangu, 33-34.

<sup>16</sup> Bhāi Gurdās, V, 2; XIV, 17; XX, 11. The service of the Khālśa as the Gurū is emphasized by Koer Singh in similar terms. Koer Singh, 138.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, IX, 16.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, VIII, 20; VI, 5; IX, 8, 9, 16; XI, 11; XII, 1; XV, 16; XVIII, 20; XXVI, 17; XIII, 1.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, XI, 24.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, I, 23; XI, 7.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, XXIII, 20; VI, 8. Cf. Banerjee, I, 118-19.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, XXIII, 19.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, V, 21.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, XV, 1.

<sup>25</sup> Contrary to the general impression, the term 'true king' was used for all the Gurus. The equation of the True Gurū with the True King was relevant here. Significantly, Gurū Rām Dās is pillar of *dīn* and *dunyā*; Gurū Arjan has established an everlasting *rāj*. The tokens of royalty are used metaphorically for the Gurū. Even a Gurmukh by the grace of the Gurū is the king of kings. (Bhai Gurdas, V, 11: XXIV, 14, 15 & 19.

<sup>26</sup> The word *sahlang* occurs in the compositions of Gurū Amar Dās and Gurū Rām Dās, as pointed out by Ganda Singh. *Mākhaz*, 34n2. It occurs in the *Vārs* of Bhāi Gurdās (XII, 8; XXVI, 25), and in a *hukamnāma* of Gurū Gobind Singh (*Hukamnāmā*, 155). Therefore the *shahlang* of the *Dabistān* may safely be taken as *sahlang* of the Sikh sources. In the *Granth Sāhib* and the *Vār* of Bhai Gurdas it means 'linked with' or 'associated with'. In the *Dabistān* and the *hukamnāma* of Gurū Gobind Singh, it means a person or a *sangat* linked with the Gurū through a Masand.

<sup>27</sup> The word *Khālśa* occurs in a composition of Kabir included in the *Granth Sāhib*. It refers to a person of exalted spiritual status. In due course the word '*Khālśa*' came to be used for a Sikh or a *sangat* directly linked with the Gurū. In a *hukamnāma* of Gurū Hargobind, the *sangat* of 'the east' are told: 'You are my *khālśa*'. *Hukamnāmā*, 67. The *sangat* of Pattan of Farid is called 'the *Khālśa* of the Guru' in a *hukamnāma* of Gurū Tegh Bahādūr. (Ibid, 77). The term *khālśa* is used more frequently in the *hukamnamas* of Gurū Gobind Singh after 1699. (Ibid, 157, 159, 161, 163, 165, 167, 169, 171, 173, 175, 77, 179, 181, 183 and 187). For the use of *khālśa* by Gurū Gobind Singh before 1699, Baagha (1969). The evidence of the *Dabistān* enables us to infer that the words *melī* and *sahlang* were used for the Sikhs linked with the Gurū through the mediacy of a Masand, and the word *khālśa* for the Sikhs directly linked with the Gurū..

<sup>28</sup> The turban was a mark of personal respectability and honour. Bhāi Gurdās talks of the truth as beautiful like the turban. Bhāi Gurdās, XXX, 8.

<sup>29</sup> Professor Irfan Habib points out that by adding the word *khwud* in the sentence in the *Dabistān* the problem is not solved. The crucial part of the sentence is: *dar makātīb nāmanigār rā*. If *khwud* is added before *rā*, then *makātīb nāmanigār* has to be read as *makātīb-i nāmanigār*, or 'letters of the author'. To make sense, however, it should be 'letters to the author'. Could *makātīb-i nāmanigār* bear this sense? In any

case, since the attribution of 'Nānak' to the author of the *Dabistān* does not make any sense, Ganda Singh suggests that there is something wrong with the statement made (*Mākhaz* 44n). The use of the name 'Nānak' in the case of the successors of Gurū Nānak is meant to imply unity between the founder and the successors. According to Kesar Singh Chhibber, the use of the word 'Nānak' by the *minās* was regarded by Gurū Arjan as a reason enough to compile the Granth so that the spurious compositions of the *minās* remained separate from the authentic *Bānī* of the true Gurus. In other words, none other than the true Gurū was entitled to use 'Nānak' for himself. Chhibber, 50.

- <sup>30</sup> In his compositions, Gurū Nānak appears to have no objection to the eating of meat.
- <sup>31</sup> The best exponent of the idea that Gurū Nānak had bestowed rulership upon Bābur for generations on the condition that his successors would not harm the followers of Gurū Nānak is Ratan Singh Bhangu: The oppression and persecution of the Sikhs by the Mughal rulers became the cause of their decline and fall. Sovereignty was justly claimed by the Sikhs as a gift from Gurū Nānak.
- <sup>32</sup> Chhibber, 21-22.
- <sup>33</sup> Most of the contemporary and near-contemporary writers refer to Gurū Gobind Singh as 'Gobind Rāi'. However, in two of the *hukamnāmas* of his father, Gurū Tegh Bahādur, the name given is 'Gobind Dās'. *Hukamnamas*, 55 & 63. The epithet 'Dās' was replaced by 'Singh' when he took baptism of the double-ended sword from 'the cherished five' (*panj piārāy*) who had been baptized by him and, among other things, given the epithet 'Singh'.
- <sup>34</sup> Contemporary evidence on the *Udāsīs* is very meagre. That renunciation and asceticism were the marked features of their life is built into the epithet *Udāsī*. In what other ways their beliefs and worship were different from those of the Sikhs of the Gurus is not clear. Sujān Rāi does not appear to treat them as radically different. For their later history, Sulakhan Singh (1999).
- <sup>35</sup> G.C. Narang states that Akbar's friendship increased 'the prestige of the Gurus and made their mission more popular with the higher classes of society'. His homage to the Gurū 'brought crowds of followers to the fold of Sikhism'. Narang, 37.
- <sup>36</sup> The contemporary Sikh works like the *Bachittar Nānak* and the *Gursobhā* underscore the religious dimension of the martyrdom of Gurū Tegh Bahādur in a situation of confrontation with Aurangzeb. Gurū Tegh Bahādur stood for religious freedom and Aurangzeb for coercion in support of his own faith. Sainapat's statement is suggestive of a general principle, the freedom of human conscience, upheld by Gurū Tegh Bahādur who became a protector of 'the honour of the whole world' (*jagg chādar*). Sainapat, 10-11 & 14-15.
- <sup>37</sup> A contemporary Sikh writer, Sainapat describes at some length the situation of internal conflict that arose in Delhi, after the institution of the Khālsa. The Khātris in particular were opposed to the injunction regarding keeping the hair uncut because ceremonial cutting of the hair was a part of their traditional practices. The state functionaries had to intervene. Similar things happened at many other places. Sainapat, 42-55 & 56.
- <sup>38</sup> The pre-Khālsa battles of Gurū Gobind Singh against the local chiefs and the Mughal *fauj-dārs* are briefly described by the contemporary

## Introduction

Sainapat, Even before the final siege of Anandpur, the *faujdār* of Sirhind had supported the hill chief against Gurū Gobind Singh. Sainapat, 14-28.

- <sup>39</sup> The Sikh writers like Sainapat and Ratan Singh Bhangu do not refer to the sack of Anandpur, but complete evacuation of the town is either explicitly stated or it is assumed. In any case, there could be no resistance to plunder which was a normal feature of warfare.
- <sup>40</sup> The *Ẓafarnāma* of Gurū Gobind Singh relates to the situation of the evacuation of Anandpur and its aftermath. The primary emphasis of the composition is on breach of promise after a solemn oath on the Quran by the Mughal Bakhshi and Diwan. The well known reference to the necessity of taking up arms comes in this context:  
*Chūn kār az hama hīlātay darguzasht*  
*Ḥalāl ast burdan b'shamshīr dast.*  
 For an English translation of the *Ẓafarnāma*, Duggal (1980). For an analysis of the *Ẓafarnāma*, Grewal, 63-67.
- <sup>41</sup> Saināpat, 93-94, 122 & 124-25. In the Sikh tradition, generally, Zorāwar Singh is one of the two sons of Gurū Gobind Singh who were executed at Sirhind. The *Ẓafarnāma* states that all the four children of the Gurū had been killed. The presence of Zorawar Singh at Chitor in 1708 is problematic, notwithstanding the explicit statements made by the two writers.
- <sup>42</sup> In 1707, a serious battle was fought near Baghaur in Rajasthan. Sainapat, 107-11.
- <sup>43</sup> On 2 October 1707 Gurū Gobind Singh wrote to his Khālśa at Dhau and Khara, two villages of the Punjab, that he had received a robe of honour (*sirōpao*) from the *Pātshāh*, along with a *dhukhdhukhi* studded with precious stones. He expected to be back in Kahlur after a short time and asked the Khālśa to come there fully armed. *Hukamnāmay*, 187 & 189.
- <sup>44</sup> According to Chhibber, Jit Singh, a Sikh of the Gurū who accompanied Mātā Sundari and Mātā Sāhib Devi to Delhi in 1707, was adopted by Mātā Sundari as her son. He was treated as a Sāhibzāda. Chhibber, 178-79.
- <sup>45</sup> One view is that Jamshed Khān was acting on behalf of Wazīr Khān, the *faujdār* of Sirhind, who was afraid of Gurū Gobind Singh's success with Bahādur Shāh. Kirpal Singh, 126-29.
- <sup>46</sup> In Delhi too, the persons to be turned out of the *sangat* were Khātris. The leaders of the opponents of the Khālśa were rich Khātris. Sainapat, 43-44 & 46.
- <sup>47</sup> According to Ratan Singh Bhangu, Gurū Gobind Singh sent baptized Singhs to Gurū Chak (Amritsar). They occupied the *gurdwāra* and constructed *bungas*. The activity of the Khālśa in the region led to conflict with the Mughal authorities. Bhangu, 47 & 49.
- <sup>48</sup> The Sikh writers of the eighteenth century generally talk of 'the Turks' as the enemies of the Khālśa. The 'Turks' could stand for the Muslim rulers and their supporters. But it was not easy to keep a distinction between individuals and the community. Kesar Singh Chhibber talks of the Muslim community as the enemy of the Sikhs, and he is hostile to Islam and the Prophet. But Chhibber looks upon 'Khātris' too as the enemies of the Gurus and the Sikhs. He brackets them with Muslims in the phrase *tattay-khattay* (Muslim-Khatri).
- <sup>49</sup> That Gurū Gobind Singh received 'a military command' from Bahādur

Shāh is accepted by Cunningham as a fact on the basis indirectly of Khāfi Khān's statement. However, Cunningham does not look upon the situation as one of genuine reconciliation. 'The emperor perhaps thought that the leader of insurrectionary Jats might be usefully employed in opposing rebellious Marathas, and Gobind perhaps saw in the imperial service a ready way of disarming suspicion and of reorganizing his followers'. Cunningham, 72 & n 2. Cf. Grewal, 67-72.

- <sup>50</sup> The motive of revenge is emphasized by both Sikh and non-Sikh writers. However, it does not go far in explaining all the facts provided by these writers themselves.

<sup>51</sup> Saināpat, 133-35.

- <sup>52</sup> Writing a decade after the *Chahār Gulshan*, Kesar Singh Chhibber devotes some pages to Banda Bahādur, Ajit Singh, Mātā Sundari and Mātā Sāhib Devi. Banda was not a Gurū for him though some people regarded him as the eleventh Gurū. Banda was a ruler. Chhibber, 176 & 178. For Ratan Singh Bhangu, Banda was neither a Gurū nor a Pātshāh. Bhangu, 131. Jit (Ajit) Singh, presumed to be a Gurū for twelve years, did have a specific following called Jit-Mallias, and he was succeeded by his son Hathī Singh who left Delhi and went to Mathura along with the family of Jit Singh. However, neither Mātā Sundari nor Mātā Sāhib Devi assumed Guruship. They were revered and followed as the widows of Gurū Gobind Singh. Chhibber, 178-82.

In the *hukamnāmas* of Mātā Sundari, included in the *Hukamnāmay* edited by Ganda Singh, issued in 1717, 1721, 1722, 1723, 1728 and 1730, and those of Mātā Sāhib Devi issued in 1726, 1729, 1730, 1731, 1732 and 1734, there is no indication that they claimed to be the Gurū. They address the Sikhs as "the Khālśa of Akāl Purakh" and ask for offerings in the name of the Gurū; they represent "the house of the Gurū" and the Khālśa are their "sons". Obviously, there is no claim to Guruship. The mere fact that the Sikhs sent offerings to them could be seen by outsiders as an acknowledgement of their Guruship. A *hukamnāma* dated 12 April 1759, addressed to the Sikhs of Patna by "the Khālśa of Sat Sri Akāl Purakh Ji", equates the Khālśa with the Gurū. *Hukamnāmay*, 233.

- <sup>53</sup> The evidence of Sikh writers on the issue of Guruship does not support the idea that any person after Gurū Gobind Singh could be regarded as Gurū. In the contemporary work of Sainapat, Guruship is vested by Gurū Gobind Singh himself in the Khālśa and Shabad-Bāni. Sainapat, 133-35. Around the mid-eighteenth century, Chaupa Singh's *Rahit-Nāma* refers to Guruship vested in the Granth Sāhib and in the Khālśa, the entire Khālśa or the entire Sikh Sangat. Chaupa Singh, 76, 98, 100, 116 & 120. Koer Singh, who is placed in the mid-eighteenth or the early nineteenth century, refers to Gurū-Khālśa and Gurū Granth. Koer Singh, 138, 139, 283 & 284. Kesar Singh Chhibber in 1769 refers to the 'ten forms' as lamps lighted by one another. He refers to the *Adi Granth* and the Khālśa as the Gurū. Chhibber, 29, 36, 112, 126, 136 & 163-64. Ratan Singh Bhangu in the 1840s talks of the Khālśa and the *Adi Granth* as the Gurū. Bhangu, 297, 298 & 389. Thus, the evidence in favour of corporal and scriptural Guruship is overwhelming. The individuals who claimed Guruship did so in spite of the doctrines of *Gurū-Granth* and *Gurū-Panth*. Grewal, 133-39.



## Introduction

- <sup>54</sup> This may be a reference to ban on cow-slaughter.
- <sup>55</sup> According to Ratan Singh Bhangu, Fateh Singh was made the *faujdar* of Samana after its conquest. Bāj Singh, a Bal Jat of Patti, was made the administrator of Sirhind after its conquest and Ali Singh was made his deputy. Two of his brothers were made Thanadars and *thanas* were established in forts. Bhāi Fateh Singh was made the leader of the Malwa Sikhs with the title of *nawāb*. It is interesting to note that Bhangu blames Banda Bahādur for not destroying Sirhind. Bhangu, 89, 97-98, 99 & 100.
- <sup>56</sup> The political motive from the very inception of the Khālśa is underscored by Ratan Singh Bhangu who talks of the feeling of revenge too in a later situation. Banda's commission was not merely to take revenge but also to establish the rule of the Khālśa.
- <sup>57</sup> Ratan Singh Bhangu too refers to Aslam Khan's fear and his reluctance to move against Banda Bahādur. Bhangu, 103.
- <sup>58</sup> The Parachas, like the Khojas, were converts to Islam mostly from the trading communities of the Punjab. Some of them carried extensive trade with the cities of Central Asia, chiefly in cloth, silk, indigo and tea. In the central districts they were generally looked upon as petty traders. Rose, III, 200-02. The Parachas of Lahore, apparently, were affluent.
- <sup>59</sup> The author disapproves of the anti-Hindu attitude of the fanatically inclined Muslims but does not say why they treated Hindus as their enemy. Were they supposed to be sympathetic to the Khālśa? That Banda Bahādur also made a clear distinction between Hindus and Muslims for revenge is mentioned by Ratan Singh Bhangu.
- <sup>60</sup> This would lend support to the idea that *hukamnāmas* in the name of Gurū Gobind Singh were sent to many places in the Punjab.
- <sup>61</sup> Ratan Singh Bhangu mentions that the Muslims of Sadhaura who took refuge in Hindu homes remained safe. Bhangu, 91.
- <sup>62</sup> Ratan Singh Bhangu refers to Banda's atrocities against Muslims in general and against some individuals in particular without any hesitation. He appears to assume that Banda's action was justified in terms of retaliation. Kesar Singh Chhibber has a special praise for Banda Bahādur's principle of retaliation.
- <sup>63</sup> This early mention of "Fateh Darshan" is important because Ratan Singh Bhangu, writing more than a hundred years later, makes much of this evidence to assert that Banda Bahādur deviated from the true faith of the Khālśa by replacing "*Wāhigurū jī kā Khālśa, Wāhigurū jī kī fateh*" with "*Fateh darshan*". He also mentions the introduction of red dress in place of the blue, and vegetarianism. Bhangu, 132-33. Kesar Singh also refers to the opposition between "*Fateh Darshan*" and "*Wāhiguru ji kī fateh*". Chhibber, 185. In a *hukamnāma* of Banda, "*fateh darshan*" is the greeting used and vegetarian diet is insisted upon. *Hukamnamay*, 193.
- <sup>64</sup> The term "Sachchā Pātshāh" is used for God and the Gurū in the sixteenth and seventeenth century Sikh literature. The term occurs in an order of Banda Bahādur which also contains the greeting "Fateh Darsan". 'Sachcha Patshah' could refer to Banda himself but the persons addressed are also called 'the Khālśa of Akāl Purakh'. *Hukamnamay*, 193. Already, in a *hukamnāma* of Gurū Gobind Singh the term "the *Khālśa* of Wahiguruji" was used. *Hukamnamay*, 191.
- <sup>65</sup> Ratan Singh Bhangu refers to letters written by Banda to the Khālśa

in the Punjab to the effect that Gurū Gobind Singh had sent him to uproot 'the Sirhindis' and 'the hilly' (chiefs) who were the proven enemies of the Gurū. Bhangu, 86.

Kesar Singh Chhibber uses the metaphor of the same sword in a different scabbard for Banda's relationship with Gurū Gobind Singh. Chhibber, 173.

- 66 The abolition of all distinctions of social background in the Khālśa is emphasized in Sikh sources too. Ratan Singh Bhangu looks upon the introduction of vegetarian diet, and the ritual of *chauka*, as a deviation from the *sarbangi* tradition of Gurū Gobind Singh in which all the Khālśa ate together, irrespective of their social background or caste. Bhangu, 133.

- 67 According to Ratan Singh Bhangu, even before the institution of the Khālśa the Sikhs belonged to castes who did not take up arms, and were mostly lower caste and outcaste people. Bhangu, 41-42.

- 68 Chhibber, 170-77. Bhangu, 74-158.

- 69 Bhangu, 141.

- 70 Chhibber, 178.

- 71 Bhangu, 131.

- 72 Ganda Singh (1976), 9-10.

- 73 Though Ratan Singh Bhangu does not refer to any inscription or coin, he puts forth the general proposition that Sikh sovereignty was a gift of Gurū Nānak. Bhangu, 20-21 & 213.

- 74 Ṭahmās Khān's reference to disorders is a euphemism. In fact some Sikh leaders had started occupying pockets of territory even in the upper Bari Doab by the mid-eighteenth century. The seal of Jai Singh Kanhiya, who became a well known chief with his headquarters of Batala in the third quarter of the century, bears the date 1750. There are other orders of Sikh chiefs during the 1750s. B.N. Goswamy and J.S. Grewal, Documents XVIII & XX. The documents in the collection of the Vaishnavas of Pindori obviously relate only to those chiefs who gave them grants, or confirmed their grants. There were other religious establishments in the Punjab which received similar grants from other chiefs at the same time, suggesting in fact that the area of territorial occupation was much wider than the upper Bari Doab.

- 75 Details of the Ghallughara of 1762 from the Sikh side are given by Ratan Singh Bhangu, highlighting the distinguished role of both Charhat Singh Sukerchakia and Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. Bhangu, 360-73.

- 76 It is interesting to note that Ratan Singh Bhangu returns the compliment by saying that the Marathas who came from the Deccan to fight Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī were "the friends only of money, being foreigners (*pardesi*)". Bhangu, 382.

- 77 There are frequent references to *gurmataṣ*, or resolutions of the entire body of the Khālśa present, in Ratan Singh Bhangu. Bhangu, 222, 270, 318, 320, 328, 385-86, 389, 399-400, 405, 416, 430 & 440. Bhangu makes the general statement too that the Khālśa used to visit Amritsar at the times of Diwali and Baisakhi after plundering the country to pass *gurmataṣ* at the Akal Takht. Ibid, 331. These resolutions were generally passed at Amritsar, but not always. The term *gurmataṣ* signified that the resolution was passed in the presence of the Gurū in the form of the Khālśa and the Gurū-Granth.

- 78 The Harmandir Sāhib at Amritsar was destroyed and desecrated by

## Introduction

Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī on two or three occasions. Everytime it was rebuilt through the collective effort of the Khālśa.

- <sup>79</sup> Unless a gurmata was passed, there was competition and contention among the Sikh leaders concerning occupation of territories. Lahore could hold a special importance. The incident mentioned here is interesting because Lahore would be occupied later by Bhangī and Kanhiya leaders in 1765 and Charhat would arrive there rather too late.
- <sup>80</sup> Ālā Singh's comment is very significant. The descendants of Chaudhari Phūl had risen into power within the framework of Mughal rule. But the Khālśa of the central Punjab had risen into power by disrupting the Mughal administration and refusing to acknowledge Mughal authority. Whereas the former did not hesitate to accept political subordination as vassals, the latter were jealous of their sovereign status.
- <sup>81</sup> The author of a *Vār* composed after the establishment of Sikh rule does talk of the downfall of Muslims and Islam. The Quran, the mosque and the *pīrs* are no longer dominant. They have been subdued and overshadowed by the faith of the Khālśa. Freedom of worship has been ensured for Hindus as well. Bhāi Gurdās, XLI.
- <sup>82</sup> Ratan Singh Bhangu dwells on the martyrdom of Nihang Gurbakhsh Singh and his companions in defence of Harmandar Sāhib in Ramdaspur (Amitsar). Bhangu, 414-25.
- <sup>83</sup> Several of the Sikh writers assert that the Khālśa had an identity distinct from that of Hindus and Muslims. Chaupa Singh, 92; Chhibber 128; Bhangu, 40.
- <sup>84</sup> It is interesting to note that the word *khulāsa* occurs in the work of Sainapat completed in 1711, that is, nearly a century earlier. It was used for those who had abandoned the Khālśa code of life. Sainapat, 47.
- <sup>85</sup> This may be a vague reference to the sacrifice of life demanded by Gurū Gobind Singh, according to the Sikh tradition, for instituting the Khālśa on the Baisakhi of 1699.
- <sup>86</sup> Bhagat Bhagwān was an *Udāsī*. His successors and followers claimed that he had founded a centre on the authority of Gurū Har Rāi. They were more popular in Bihar than in the Punjab, but they were influential in the Punjab too. Sulakhan Singh, 12, 20, 21, 22, 71, 73, 90 & 91. It is likely that Ghulam 'Alī Khān received this garbled information from some *Udasi* follower of Bhagat Bhagwān.
- <sup>87</sup> In the early nineteenth century, "ten of the Bābhā, ten of Babar" would carry the implication that for the Sikhs, just as Guruship had ended after the tenth master, so had imperial sway ended after Muḥammad Shāh. The first part of the saying was a statement of Sikh doctrine, and the second part a political statement.
- <sup>88</sup> For different versions of the origin of the Suthra-Shahis, their appearance, and beliefs and practices, Rose, III, 445-48. Ghulam 'Alī Khān's statement appears to be based on personal observation. The Suthra-Shahis were also *Udasi*. It appears that in the early nineteenth century the *Udasi* groups were better known outside the Punjab than the religious representatives of the Khālśa.
- <sup>89</sup> This version of Gurū Tegh Bahādur's activity appears to have become a stereotype by the early nineteenth century.
- <sup>90</sup> Multan was conquered by a Sikh chief but it was recovered by the

## SIKH HISTORY FROM PERSIAN SOURCES

Afghans a few years later. In 1808, it was not yet conquered by Ranjit Singh.

- <sup>91</sup> The Punjab ended at the river Sutlej for our author, as for the earlier writers.
- <sup>92</sup> The majority of the Sikh chiefs were Jats. Only one was a *kalāl* and another a carpenter. There were two Khatri chiefs also in the late eighteenth century but no leather-worker. For details, Sachdeva (1994).
- <sup>93</sup> The reference to the army of Bābā Nānak appears to replicate the belief of the Sikhs that their sovereignty was derived from Gurū Nānak.
- <sup>94</sup> *Karāh* could carry the wider implication of a kitchen that was open to all.
- <sup>95</sup> The point is not made explicit but the implication is absolutely clear.
- <sup>96</sup> Possibly, the Punjab originally was meant to connote not *panj-āb* but *panj-dōāb*. In any case, the province of Lahore contained five *doabs*.
- <sup>97</sup> In the early nineteenth century, the majority of the Sikhs were Jats, followed by outcastes.
- <sup>98</sup> The eighteenth and early nineteenth century Sikh writers mention the use of *bhang* without any inhibition. The Nihangs generally keep the *deg* of *sukhhka* (*bhang*) at their *deras* ready all the time for anyone to drink.
- <sup>99</sup> Nainā Devī, on the top of the first high range from Anandpur, was the place where according to the *Dabistān* a Sikh of Gurū Hargobind had cut the nose of the goddess. Nevertheless, the myth of the goddess being invoked by Gurū Gobind Singh had developed in the late eighteenth century. and this popular belief is reflected in Skinner's statement.
- <sup>100</sup> Sainapat, who makes no reference whatever to the goddess, talks of the mission of Gurū Gobind Singh as the extermination of evil-doors and exaltation of the pious. Ratan Singh Bhangu mentions sovereign rule as the purpose of instituting the *Khālśa*. Both the authors looked upon the contemporary rulers as the opposing party and not the 'Muslims'. Skinner appears to reflect a popular impression rather than a view based on reliable evidence.
- <sup>101</sup> In Ratan Singh Bhangu's *Panth Prakāsh* the Akālīs are depicted as deeply religious and staunchly committed to the cause of the *Khālśa*, fighting in the van and ready to lay down their lives. The British writers of the early nineteenth century do refer to the anti-Muslim bias of the Akālīs or Nihangs. But to kill Muslims in cold blood is nowhere sanctioned in any work.
- <sup>102</sup> That all Sikhs were soldiers cannot be taken literally. In the early nineteenth century there were several categories of Sikhs who did not follow the profession of arms.
- <sup>103</sup> Sikh skill in musketry and mobile warfare were appreciated by Qāzī Nūr Muḥammad in 1764-65.
- <sup>104</sup> The preference for 'blue' and rejection of 'red' is mentioned by Ratan Singh Bhangu in the context of the differences between the Tat *Khālśa* and Banda Bahādūr.
- <sup>105</sup> *Kachhchha* is now regarded as one of 'the 5 ks', that is, obligatory items beginning with the letter k, like *kes*, *kirpān*, *kara* and *kangha*. A late eighteenth century Sikh writer refers to *kachhchh* as the symbol of sexual restraint. Bhāi Gurdās, XLI.
- <sup>106</sup> All these injunctions are found in the early eighteenth-century Sikh works.

## Introduction

- <sup>107</sup> Contrasting attitude towards beef and pork goes back to the early days of the Khālsa.
- <sup>108</sup> The use of *bhang* is not mentioned but it would be included in “anything”.
- <sup>109</sup> That commensality was common down to the clean outcastes like barbers and water-carriers is evident from the Sikh sources. However, the position regarding the sweepers and cobblers is not clear.
- <sup>110</sup> There is no explicit reference to the Granth and there is no indication that Skinner had any idea of the authors whose works were included in it.

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## Translators' Note

The Persian texts here translated relate to the history of the Sikhs up to about 1765, the year by which their dominance over the Punjab had been established, and which in a sense marks the close of one period of their history. It is for this period too that Persian supplies the major source material for Sikh history, apart, of course, from the Gurmukhi corpus. Some of the compositions of the Gurūs (a Persian poem by Gurū Nānak in the *Gurū Granth Śāhib* and the *Ẓafarnāma* of Gurū Gobind Singh in the *Dasam Granth*) are in Persian; but the Persian texts here translated are entirely from sources external to the Sikh community.

The texts begin with a brief record of Akbar's meeting with Gurū Arjan in 1598, in Abū'l Fazl's celebrated *Akbarnāma*, constituting the first known reference to the Gurūs or Sikhs in Persian by any outsider. In all, we have twenty texts of varying lengths. Some of these have been translated previously, but the bulk of the material has not been rendered into English uptill now, and some of the original texts have not even been printed. Even where previous translations exist, the rendering here is made afresh; and the attempt throughout is to present a translation as accurately representing the sense of the original as possible. For reasons of space, it has not been possible to indicate, except in a few important cases, where our renderings are different from those of the earlier translators. It may be pointed out that Texts 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 19 and 20 have not been previously translated at all; Texts 13, 16 and 18 have had only abridged translations made of them; and the very important Text 3 (*Dabistān-i Mazāhib*), though translated earlier, here incorporates a version of the work, giving us much additional information not so far available to historians of the Sikhs.

A word may be offered about selection. This volume cannot claim to include everything written in Persian about the Sikhs before 1765. Even among selected texts such as Texts 13, 14 and 18, only extracts from portions dealing with the Sikhs, have been included either to avoid repetition of what has already been given from earlier sources or (as in the case of Text 18) to avoid excessive and not very relevant detail. Texts 19 and 20 do not strictly come within the compass of this volume, since they were written much later than 1765 (in 1808 and 1825); but they are brief descriptions of how Sikhs as a community appeared to outsiders after their successes of the 1760's and may be taken to form a kind of conclusion to the volume.

Some of the texts contain derogatory expressions for the Gurūs and the Sikhs. Yet these very sources provide many facts not otherwise known. In including them in this collection, we have been guided by the precedent of the great historian of the Sikhs, the late Professor Ganda Singh, who, while publishing the text of Qāzī Nūr Muḥammad's *Jangnāma* in 1939, argued that, when the historical value of a text "outweighed the objectionable character of its language," the interests of history should prevail. We have, however, not translated the derogatory expressions in most cases, but marked the places where they occur with an asterisk (\*). Otherwise, the translations are as closely literal as possible, given the different idioms of the two languages, Persian and English.

The texts have been translated by a group of members of the Aligarh Historians Society (Majida Bano, Irfan Habib, Iqbal Husain, Iqtidar Alam Khan, Shireen Moosvi, and S. Ali Nadeem Rezavi). Irfan Habib has gone through all the translations so as to ensure uniformity and avoid duplication in annotation. Each extract is preceded by a note from the translator indicating briefly the nature of the source and giving the necessary data about manuscripts and/or editions from which the translation has been made. Footnotes cover problems of text, senses of words, chronology and corroboration with other sources. Locations of well-known places are not generally indicated; but it is hoped that the three maps will adequately serve readers who wish to be better informed on geography.

It may be borne in mind that the *karoh* or *kos*, by the Mughal imperial standard, was equal to about 2½ miles. This is the most usual measure for road distance mentioned in our texts.

We have generally followed the transliteration system followed by Steingass in his *Persian-English Dictionary*, simplify-

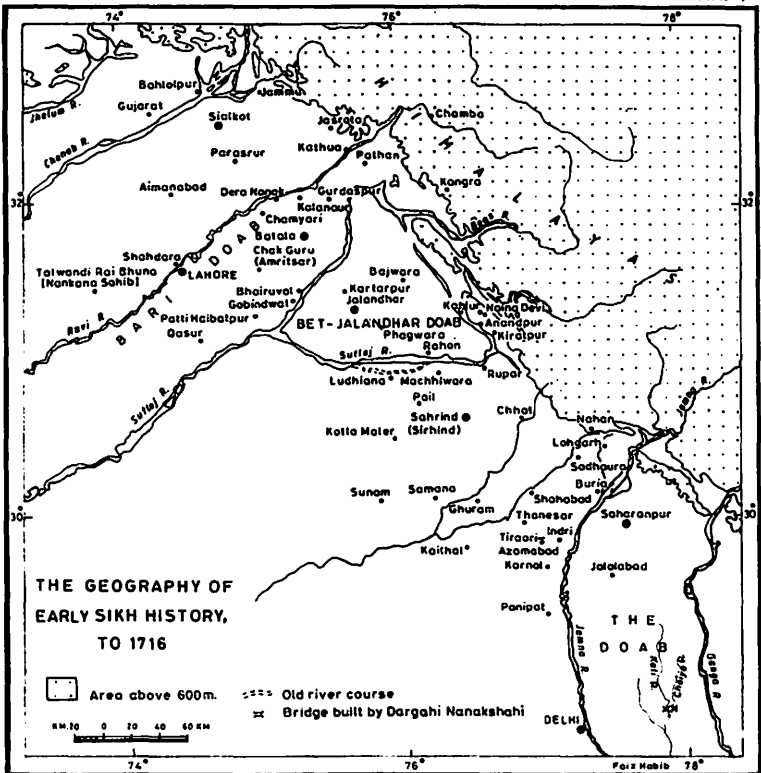
ing it in some cases, notably in respect of representations of the Arabic article, *al*. Thus we have read Shihābuddin, 'Abdullāh, and so on, rather than Shihābu'd-dīn, 'Abdu'llāh, etc. Well-known place and river names have been given their modern English spellings; where the form of the name in our source is substantially different from the modern, we have given both the form as it is found in the text and the one currently employed. In the place names, we have generally omitted diacritical marks, though in personal names and terms we have tried to be rigorous in the matter. From early eighteenth century the word *gurū* came in Persian writing to be spelt also as *gorū*, to prevent it being pronounced as *garū*: this convention was adopted even by Professor Ganda Singh while writing in Urdu. It seems, however, needless to persevere with the spelling '*gorū*' in English, where the orthographic problem does not exist; and the form *gurū* is used throughout in these translations.

The translators are grateful for the guidance and help they have throughout received from Professor J.S. Grewal, who gave advice on the texts to be translated and on their arrangement. He also made available his copy of Professor Ganda Singh's *Mākhaz-i Tawārīkh-i Sikhān*, not obtainable at Aligarh. Finally, he went through the entire texts of the translations and suggested many corrections and improvements. Professor Grewal's own contributions to the footnotes sometimes bear his initials, J.S.G., but he has also clarified many points elsewhere as well. His introduction to this volume has given an authoritative assessment of the significance of these texts for reconstructing the history of the Sikh community; and after such assessment it would be superfluous for the translators to say anything further in justification of their undertaking.



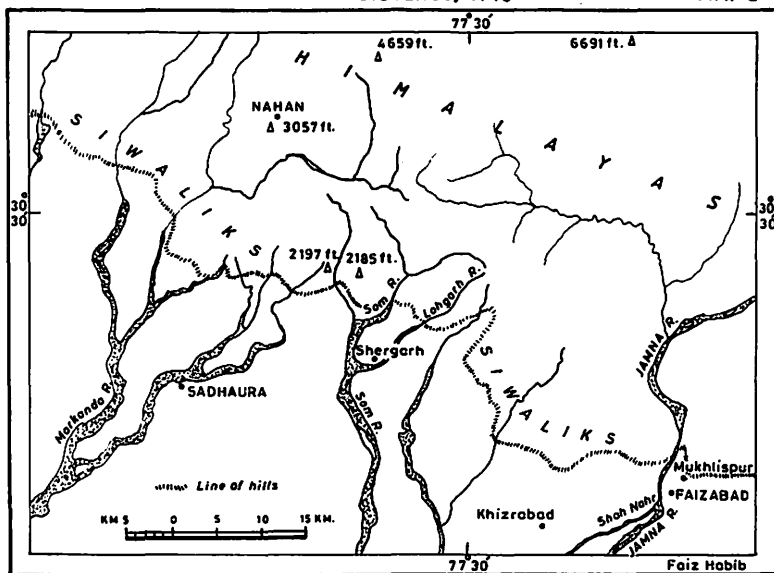
# **Translations**

MAP 1



# LOHGARH AND ITS VICINITY Sikh Resistance, 1710

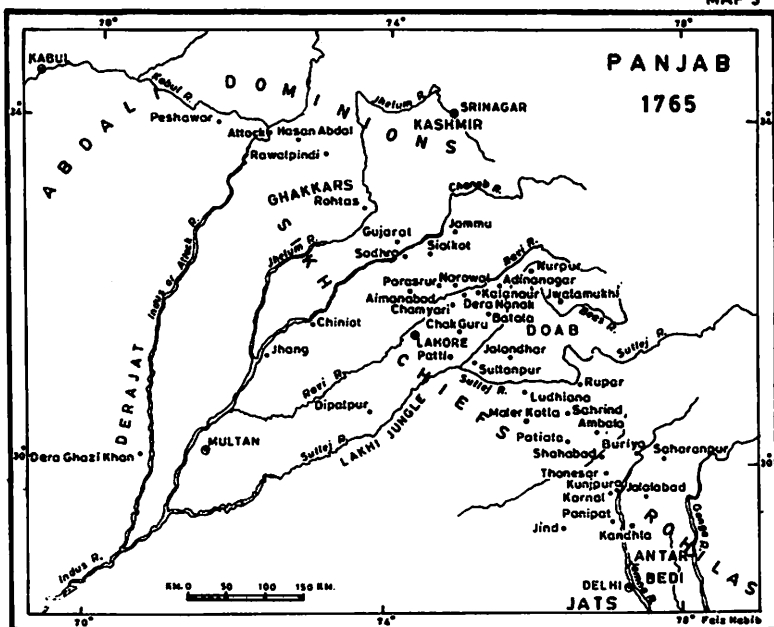
MAP 2



Based on 1A Sheet 48 (1861)

Faiz Habib

MAP 3



# Akbar Meets Gurū Arjan, 1598

From Abū'l Fazl, *Akbarnāma*

*Translated by Shireen Moosvi*

Abū'l Fazl in his great history, the *Akbarnāma*, reports Akbar's visit to Gurū Arjan on his final departure from Lahore in 1598. Abū'l Fazl's slip in describing Gurū Arjan as leader of a 'Brahmancial' sect may be explained by his own absence from the Imperial Camp at this time, which meant that he was describing the meeting second-hand, presumably on the basis of a news-report.

The translation is made from the printed text, ed. Agha Aḥmad Ali and Abdur Rahim, Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1886, III, p.746. Our version is independent of that of the same passage in H. Beveridge's translation of the *Akbarnāma*, III, Calcutta, 1921, p.1115.

## TRANSLATION

Text, III, p.746

On 13 Āzar [4 November 1598] His Majesty crossed the river Beas on an elephant near Gobindwāl, while the troops crossed over by a [boat] bridge. On this day, the house of Arjan Gurū [spelt 'Gor'] received fresh lustre through His Majesty alighting there. He is a leader of the Brahmanical faith, the position descending from one generation to another. And he has great store of [spiritual] love. Since his hope [for a visit from His Majesty] arose out of [sincere] devotion, His Majesty accepted his invitation.

## 2

# Guru Arjan's Martyrdom, 1606

From Jahāngīr, *Tuzuk-i Jahāngīrī*

*Translated by Shireen Moosvi*

Jahāngīr in his memoirs, *Tuzuk-i Jahāngīrī* (ed. Saiyid Ahmad, Aligarh, 1864, p.34), says that after entering Lahore on 8 Muḥarram 1015 AH (16 May 1606), he ordered the execution of Gurū Arjan since he had enrolled a number of Hindus and Muslims as his disciples, and had blessed the rebel prince Khusrau, the eldest son of Jahāngīr. The passage occurs comes immediately after Jahāngīr has described a promotion in *manṣab* made on 22 Muḥarram (30 May 1606).

However, according to the reports of the Jesuit fathers at Jahāngīr's court, as summarised by Fr. Guerreiro (*Jahangir and the Jesuits*, tr., C.H. Payne, London, 1930, pp.11-12), Jahāngīr had ordered Gurū Arjan to be imprisoned to force him to pay a heavy fine, and he died out of torture inflicted upon him by his surety who had pledged to pay the fine on his behalf (See Appendix). This is also corroborated by the *Dabistān*: a translation of its sub-chapter on the Sikhs is given separately in this volume. For the traditional Sikh accounts, see Macauliffe, *Sikh Religion*, III, pp.84-100: according to these, the Gurū's death occurred in June 1606.

The translation of the passage in the *Tuzuk* has been made directly from the printed Persian text, checked with the MS text presented from Jahāngīr's own library to Saif Khān, now in the Central Record Office. Hyderabad (photocopy in CAS in History Library, AMU, Aligarh). The present translation will be found to differ in some particulars from the one given in the translation of A. Rogers and H. Beveridge, London, 1909, p.72.

## TRANSLATION

text, p.34

In Gobindwāl, which is on the river Beās, a Hindu named Arjan used to live in the garb of a spiritual master and mystic guide, under the influence of which he had induced a large number of simple-minded Hindus and even some ignorant and silly Muslims, to become attached to his ways and customs. He had the drum of his spiritual leadership and sainthood loudly beaten. They called him *Gurū*. From all sides and directions ignorant ones and dervish-garb worshippers<sup>1</sup> inclined towards him and reposed full faith in him. For three or four generations they [he and his precursors] had kept this business brisk. For a long time the thought kept coming to me of either putting an end to this shop of falsehood or to bring him into the fold of the people of Islām. It happened now that *Khusrāu* was passing by that route. This useless manlet wished to attend on him. *Khusrāu* halted at the place where he had his seat and residence. He saw him and conveyed to him some far-fetched<sup>2</sup> things and on his forehead put a finger-mark in saffron, which in the usage of Hindus is called *qashqa* [Pers. for *īka*] and is held to be auspicious. When this matter was brought to the notice of this glorious court and I realised the full extent of his false conduct, I ordered that he be brought to my presence [at Lahore]. I gave over his homes and houses and children to Murtazā *Khān* [Jahāngīr's *Mīr Bakhshī*],<sup>3</sup> confiscated his goods and ordered him to be capitally punished.<sup>4</sup>

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### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> *Gaul-parastān*. *Gaul* means a dervish's coarse woollen garment; *parastān*, worshippers, followers.
- <sup>2</sup> *Farā-yāftā*. In the Haidarabad MS some one has altered *farā-yāftā*, as original written, to *qarār-yāftā*, 'settled'.
- <sup>3</sup> The minister in charge of *manṣab* (rank) awards and military contingents, as well as the intelligence system. He was next in rank to the first minister, the *Dīwān-i A'lā*, in charge of finance and revenue.
- <sup>4</sup> *Siyāsāt* literally means punishment, and *yāsā* is the Mongol term for law, and by extension, punishment under law. In Mughal times both words were used for capital punishment. Under the *yāsā* of Chengis *Khān*, the blood of princes and honoured persons was not spilled; such means of killing were employed for them, as to prevent this happening. Professor Grewal suggests in the introduction that this might be Jahāngīr's meaning here.

## APPENDIX

**Fr. Guerreiro's Account of Gurū Arjan's Martyrdom**  
Payne's transl., *Jahāngīr and the Jesuits*, pp.11-12

While the Prince was flying from Agra, he passed the spot where there dwelt one whom the Gentiles call Goru, a title equivalent to that of Pope amongst the Christians. This person was looked upon as a saint, and was greatly venerated. On account of his reputation for holiness, the Prince went to see him, hoping apparently that this would bring him good fortune. The Goru congratulated him on his new royalty, and placed his tiara<sup>1</sup> on his head. Although the Prince was a Moor, the Goru deemed it lawful to bestow on him this mark of dignity, proper only to a Gentile, since he was the son of a Pagan woman; and the Prince accepted it, believing the Goru to be a saint.

When, after his son's capture, the King heard of this circumstance, he ordered the Goru to be apprehended, and for some time kept him a prisoner. However, certain Gentiles interceded on behalf of their holy man, and in the end he was allowed to purchase his freedom for a hundred thousand *crusados*, for which sum a wealthy Gentile became his surety. Now this man thought that either the King would remit the fine or that the Goru would himself provide, or at any rate find some means of raising, the sum required. But in these hopes he was disappointed, and in consequence he proceeded to take from the wretched pontiff all his worldly possessions, including the furniture of his house, and even the clothes of his wife and children; for these Gentiles regard neither Pope nor Father where money is concerned. And when this did not suffice to pay the fine, he subjected him to every kind of ill-usage, causing him to be beaten with slippers, and preventing food from being given to him, in the hope that his victim, to escape from his sufferings, would produce the money which he still believed him to possess. But neither the Goru nor those about him could meet the demands of his tormentor; and at last the poor man died, overcome by the miseries heaped upon him by those who had formerly paid him reverence. The Gentile sought to escape his obligations by flight, but he was taken, and having been deprived of everything that he possessed, was thrown into prison, where he died.

<sup>1</sup> 'Tiara' is a mistake here, perpetrated by Guerreiro, not by his source. As Payne points out, Fr. J. Xavier in his letter from Jahāngīr's court has 'tiqa', i.e. *tīka*: "elle lhe deu o parabem do nouo reynado e lhe pos o tiqa na testa."



### 3

## Sikhism and the Sikhs, 1645-46

From 'Mobad', *Dabistān-i Mazāhib*

*Translated by Irfan Habib*

The *Dabistān*, or, as it is popularly known, *Dabistān-i Mazāhib*, is a unique work on the various religions and their sects, compiled on the basis of a consciously impartial collection of material on each religion or sect, made by the author through a reading of their texts and by obtaining oral reports. The last year, given in the work, is A.H. 1063 (A.D. 1653), so that the work must have been completed that year or shortly afterwards. Within the account of the Sikhs, given as a separate chapter in the section on Indian sects, the current year is given as A.H. 1055 (A.D. 1645-46), while in what we describe as Version A, the year when he "encountered", that is, mainly gathered his information on the Sikhs is said to have been A.H. 1053 (A.D. 1643-44).

The author in his work does not give his name but only the poetic title 'Mobad' (Parsi priest). The attribution to Muḥsin 'Fānī' has no justification in the text, nor has the one to Mirzā Zū'lfīqār. Internal evidence, comprising a fairly large amount of personal details of the author, indicates that he was brought up in the Sipāsī or Yazdānī sect of the Parsis, which was founded by Āzar Kaiwān (d. 1618) at Patna. The author was possibly a grandson of Āzar Kaiwān himself (a recent identification with Āzar's son Kaiḫusrau Isfandyār seems improbable, owing to Āzar Kaiwān having died at the age of eighty-five, while the author was yet an infant). The facts that the author gives for himself show that he was born c. 1615 and in the 1630's lived mostly in Kashmir, though he then

probably also visited Lahore and other places in the Punjāb. In 1640-41 he was in Gujarāt (West Punjāb) which seems to have become for some time his family seat. In 1642-44 he was at Lahore, and from there he travelled to Gurū Hargobind's seat at Kiratpur in 1643-44. In 1644 he visited Meshed, returning thence *via* Kabul, and visiting Multān in 1644-45. The next year found him back at Gujarāt, and early in 1646 at Lahore. In 1646-47 he left the Punjāb for a visit to western India and the Deccan, returning only in 1649. But we find him in Orissa (on the Quṭbshāhī side of the frontier) from 1651 onwards. These facts confirm the statement in Version A that his account of the Sikhs is based on information mainly collected in 1643-44, when he met Gurū Hargobind himself, with whom he claims to have had correspondence as well. He also claims good personal acquaintance with the next Gurū, Har Rāi. But the chapter on the Sikhs also contains some further information received until 1645-46, whereafter he was in the Punjāb only once, in 1649.

On the author and the work as a whole, an important paper by the late M. Athar Ali, has appeared posthumously in the *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society*, London, Vol.9(3), 1999, pp.365-73.

There are many surviving MSS of the work, and a type-set edition of the work printed by Nazar Ashraf was issued from Calcutta, 1809. This is now very rare. Ibrāhīm b. Muhammad's ed., Bombay, 1875 (reprinted Tehran, 1961) and Nawal Kishor ed., Lucknow, 1877, are more commonly used. All references in our translation are to the Bombay edition.

On consulting MSS of the work the present translator found that these printed editions, which have so far been used by students of Sikh history, carry what appears to be a revised, somewhat abridged version. The earlier (and generally lengthier) text is to be found in M.A. Library, Aligarh MS: University Library Coll., Box 2, No.2 (transcribed 1792); Fārsiya 200/1 *Shu'ba-i 'Ām*; transcribed in 1763); and M.A.O. Coll. Collection F. Akhbār/8 (transcribed, 1829). The additional information provided in this version ('Version A') has been incorporated in our translation. Wherever it has been used, this has been indicated either in the text itself or in the

footnotes. The additional information provided by Version A is not inconsiderable; and it is hoped that this would add to the value of the present translation.

The *Dabistān* was rendered into English by D. Shea and A. Troyer, *The Dabistān or School of Manners*, 3 vols., London, 1843. Though widely used it had many errors: some of these, occurring in the sub-chapter or section on Sikhism, have led to much criticism. (See M.A. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Oxford, 1909, IV, 21-22n.) Dr Ganda Singh published the text of the *Dabistan's* chapter on the Sikhs (with no reference to Version A, of which he was, of course, unaware) with a translation of the chapter as a separate monograph, Lahore, 1940 (the text has also been reprinted with Urdu annotation in the same scholar's *Mākhaz-i Tawārīkh-i Sikhān*, Amritsar, 1949, pp.23-50). The present translation has been made independently, but has been compared throughout with Dr Ganda Singh's version (referred to by the abbreviation 'G.S.'). It may be noted that Dr Ganda Singh maintained the traditional view that Muḥsin Fānī was the author of the present work.

In the Addendum to the translation is given a passage containing references to Sikhs, drawn from the notice of Pratāp Mal Chadda given in another part of the work. It may be observed that it is throughout the practice of the author of the *Dabistān* to give freely the criticism of one persuasion by the followers of another. And the critical remarks on the Sikhs by Pratāp Mal, therefore, form no exception.

## TRANSLATION

*Dabistān*, Bombay ed., pp.178-93

The Nānak Panthīs, who are popularly known as "Gurū-Sikhs", do not believe in images or idol-temples. Nānak was a Bedī, and the Bedīs are a sub-caste of the Khatri. He acquired repute during the reign of His Majesty King Firdaus Makānī<sup>1</sup> Ṣāhiruddīn Bābūr [1526-30 A.D.]. Before the victory of Firdaus Makānī over the Afghans, he was a *modī* of Daulat Khān Lodī, who was one of the great nobles of Ibrāhīm Khān, the ruler of India. The *modī* is a person who has charge of the grain [stores].

The mystical spirit<sup>2</sup> came over him and acquired power over his heart. Thereupon he went to the shop, and whatever of his

own grain and of Daulat Khān he had in the shop or in his house, he gave away, and broke the ties with his wife and children. Daulat Khān was astonished on hearing the news. [But] when he found Nānak to be under mystical influence, he refrained from injuring him.

To be brief, Nānak took to severe austerities, and first of all reduced his food. After some time he contented himself with drinking a little of cow's milk; then, he took only ghee; then, only water. Finally, he only swallowed air, such persons being called in Hindi *pawan-ahārī*.<sup>3</sup>

Many persons became his disciples. Nānak believed in the Oneness of God and in the way that it is asserted in Muḥammadan theology. He also believed in transmigration of souls. Holding wine and pork to be unlawful, he had [himself] abandoned eating meat. He decreed avoidance of causing harm to animals.<sup>4</sup> It was after his time that meat-eating spread among his followers. Arjan Mal, who was one of his lineal successors, found this to be evil. He prohibited people from eating meat, saying: "This is not in accordance with Nānak's wishes". Later, Hargobind, son of Arjan Mal, ate meat and took to hunting. Most of their [the Gurūs'] followers adopted his practice.

Just as Nānak praised the Muslims, he also commended the *avatārs*, gods and goddesses of the Hindus, but he regarded them all as created beings, not the Creator. He denied the [possibility of] Descent [of God into human soul] or Union [between God and man].<sup>5</sup> They say, he held the Muslims' rosary in his hand and put [the Hindus'] sacred thread on his neck. (He recited the formula of faith and offered prayers in the Muslim manner, and recited the *mantras* and *gayātrī* and offered *pūjā* according to the Hindu religion).<sup>6</sup>

His followers describe so many of his miracles that this short account cannot find space for them. One is that Nānak, having suffered at the hands of the Afghans, set the Mughals over them, so that in [A.H.] 932 [A.D. 1526] His Majesty King Firdaus Makānī Ṣāhiruddīn Muḥammad Bābur obtained victory over Ibrāhīm Afghan.<sup>7</sup>

They say that in one of his various journeys *Bābā* Nānak<sup>8</sup> was spending a night in a fort. He became immersed in enjoying the sight of God. Some children were playing around; however much they laid his hands on his body, there was no reaction from him. They sewed up the openings of his eyes, nose and ears, and strongly tied his hands. When Nānak recovered from his trance, he

found himself tied up in this manner. He thereupon walked towards one of the houses and, reaching the door of the house, cried out, "Is there someone in this house who can untie my eyes and hands?" A handsome woman took him inside the house, untied his hands and opened up whatever they had sewn. She had to cut by her teeth the threads closing up Bābā Nānak's eyes. Necessarily, some of the colour of the woman's forehead mark was left on Nānak's forehead. Her *tilak*, that is, the woman's own forehead-mark, was also disturbed. As Nānak came out of the house, the neighbours saw him, and thought he had had intercourse with the woman. As a result, the woman became a butt of scorn among the people, and her husband too began to spurn her. One day, the woman came to Nānak and told him, "I, for the sake of God, rendered you service, and now they all suspect me." Nānak said, "Tomorrow the gate of the fort will be shut, and will not open until touched by your hand." The next day, however much they tried to open the gate, it did not open. The people found themselves in a condition of distress, since it was an elevated place, far from water. Animals too could not be taken out. The residents of the fort went to persons in whose virtue they had faith. But the gate did not open at those persons' prayers as well. At last the people went to Nānak, and asked him, "O dervish, what is to be done in this matter?" He replied, "This gate will not open, except by the hand of a woman, who has not done anything with a stranger that is not proper." The people of the fort took to the gate women in whose virtue and piety they had faith; but it proved to be of no avail. This went on till every woman who was in the fort went to the gate, but to no profit. As a result, the people gave up, sitting down in despair. At the time of the [Muslim] afternoon prayers, the woman who had sincerely helped Bābā Nānak came. Seeing her the people laughed, and her husband and relations, being ashamed, scolded her. But the woman lent no ear to her family's words, and putting her hand to the door-ring pulled it. The closed gate swung open. People, taken by surprise, now fell at the woman's feet.

Nānak's *Bānī*, that is, his verses,<sup>9</sup> are concerned entirely with inward addresses [to God], [good] counsels, and exhortations; and most of his utterances are in respect of God's greatness and His sanctity. All those [verses] are in the language of the Jatts of the Punjāb. "Jattī" in the dialect of the Punjāb means a villager, a rustic. His followers have no attachment to the Sanskrit language. The rules and regulations that Nānak introduced will be described hereafter.

In his verses Nānak says, “There are many skies and earths. The prophets, saints, *avatārs*, and *siddhs* have obtained perfection from serving God. Whoever strives in worshipping God, can reach Him by whatever path he chooses. One can reach God by abstaining from causing harm to living things.”<sup>10</sup> [Persian] verse:

Bring forth rectitude, so that you may be safe

Rectitude from you; Victory from God.

Nānak’s descendants [lit. children] are found in the Punjāb; they are called *kartārīs*.<sup>11</sup> But in the view of some, succession [to Nānak] was not obtained by Nānak’s children. They say that after Nānak, Gurū Angad, from the sub-caste of Trehan,<sup>12</sup> of the Khatri [caste], succeeded Nānak at his orders. After him, Gurū Amardās, from the Bhalla sub-caste of the Khatri, became his successor. Thereafter Gurū Rāmdās succeeded: he was a Sodhi Khatri, and was popularly called Sri Gora.<sup>13</sup> After Rāmdās’s death, his son Arjan Mal sat in his father’s seat, and in his time the Sikhs, that is, [his] “disciples”, became quite numerous. They began to introduce exaggeration in their belief, and said that Nānak is God, and the world is his creation. But in his verses Bābā Nānak regards himself a servant of God and speaks of God as Nirānjan,<sup>14</sup> Pārbrahm,<sup>15</sup> and Parmeshar,<sup>16</sup> Who does not have a body nor a material existence and does not attach Himself to any person. The Sikhs say that Nānak [too] was just like this: he did not have a body; but by his own powers, he showed himself to us. They have come to believe that when Nānak abandoned his body, he entered that of Gurū Angad, his close servant. Gurū Angad thus means Nānak. Afterwards, Gurū Angad similarly descended into Amardās’s body; and he in the same way placed himself in Rāmdās’s body; and Rāmdās the same way came into Gurū Arjan. They call each one of them *maḥal*,<sup>17</sup> the first *maḥal*, being Nānak, the second Angad, and so on, till the fifth *maḥal*, which is Gurū Arjan. They said, whoever does not regard Gurū Arjan as identical with Bābā Nānak, is a *marankh*, that is an infidel (*kāfir*).<sup>18</sup>

They tell many stories [of Nānak]. They say Bābā Nānak in ancient times was *Rāja* Janak. When Sukhdev, son of Biyās Rakhīsar,<sup>19</sup> came to him in order to learn the way to reach the Truth, he found the *Rāja* sitting with one foot thrown into fire. The people, mounted and on foot and in ranks, [and] the deputies and ministers, were engaged in transacting affairs of state; elephants and horses passed in review. Sukhdev felt that such a [spiritually] perfect man should not be tied up with, and interested in, worldly affairs. The *Rāja*, who possessed the knowledge of [people’s] hearts, discovered

[what thoughts were passing through Sukhdev's mind] and with his power created the illusion of fire breaking out in the houses and ultimately fully destroying the houses and palaces. The *Rāja* heard and saw all of it, but paid absolutely no attention to it, till the fire reached the place where the *Rāja* and Sukhdev themselves were. The *Rāja* did not even look at it. Sukhdev had with him a wooden vessel for water, which they call *karmandal*. It now caught fire. Sukhdev involuntarily jumped from his place and got hold of the *karmandal* [to put out the fire]. The *Rāja* laughed and said to Sukhdev: "All these goods and valuables and such things that I had were destroyed, and my heart showed no attachment to them. They were thus destroyed, and I felt no sorrow. And you, just for the sake of the *karmandal*, jumped up from your place. Who, now, has his heart tied to worldly things?" Sukhdev [hearing this] repented his own ill-condition. This story has been heard from the Sikhs of Gurū Nānak. In the *Jog Bāsisht*, which is one of the authoritative books of the Hindus, the story is recorded in the following manner...[Story omitted in this translation].<sup>20</sup> Till this point we have followed the account [of *Rāja Janak* as given] in the *Jog Bāsisht*.

To be brief, in the view of Nānak's followers, Gurū Nānak in one of the past worlds was *Rāja Janak*, and, along with temporal sovereignty, had performed righteous spiritual deeds and called upon people to turn to God. This writer heard from trustworthy Sikhs that when Bābā Nānak exhibited himself in *Satjug* [the earliest of ages], and a large mass of Sikhs collected together, he sent a cow to the *rasoī*, or kitchen. When having cooked its flesh, they brought it to the *sangat*, or assembly, some ate it, and some fled from it. The *Gurū* offered a prayer so that the cow [became alive and] stood up. Those who had fled, saw what had happened, and, coming back, pleaded that now they would eat whatever is ordered [by the *Gurū*]. The *Gurū*, that is, Nānak, said: "This cannot be done [now]. The compact between us is for the *Taretā-jug*." Thus in the *Taretā-jug*, the *Gurū* exhibited himself, and the disciples collected together. He killed a horse and, in the manner I have stated, brought it [horse-meat] to the assembly. Some ate it and some shunned it. Thereafter he prayed, so that the horse became alive. Those who had fled [from its meat] made the same past plea. He said in reply, "The compact between us and you is for the *Dwāpar-jug*." In the *Dwāpar* age, they brought an elephant to the *rasoī*. At that time the same things happened that I have spoken of, and the compact was referred to the *Kal-jug*.<sup>21</sup> In the *Kal-jug*, they brought a man into the *rasoi*. Whoever ate [his flesh] obtained

liberation, whoever shunned it, fell into torment.

[From] a Sikh, who called Nānak an intimate servant of God, it was heard that, in the *Sat-jug*, Nānak severed all attachments to the body, and his soul then made its way to a fork, one road leading to heaven, the other to hell. Nānak chose the road to hell, and betook himself to hell. He took the people living in hell out of hell. God Almighty addressed him, saying: "These disobedient ones cannot be admitted to heaven. You should go to the earth, and set free this group there." Of necessity, Nānak came to the earth. Today, the people from hell are those who have become his followers. The Gurū comes to this world, and departs, with the aim that all these people may receive salvation.

Except this man, I did not see any Sikh who does not consider Bābā Nānak to be God.<sup>22</sup>

To be brief, Nānak's followers scorn images. Their belief is that all *Gurūs* are Nānak, as has been said above. They do not recite the *mantras* of the Hindus and do not pay respect to their idol-temples. They do not count the *avatārs* for anything. They do not have any attachment to Sanskrit, which the Hindus call the language of angels.

In short, in every *maḥal* [each *Gurū's* reign], the Sikhs increased in numbers, till in the reign of *Gurū* Arjan Mal, they became very numerous. Not many cities remained in the inhabited region, where the Sikhs had not settled in some number. Among them there is no restriction such as that the Brahman may not become a disciple (*sikh*) of a Khatri, since Nānak was a Khatri. No *Gurū* of theirs has been a Brahman, as has been related. Similarly, they have made Khatris subordinate to the Jatts, who are the lowest caste of the Bais [Vaishyas]. Thus most of the leading *masands* of the *Gurū* are Jatts, and the Brahmans and Khatris [only] *melī*<sup>23</sup> and *sahlang*,<sup>24</sup> that is, disciples and followers of the *Gurū*. And the status of disciple and follower of the *Gurū* is approved through the mediation of the *masand*.

It should be known that during the time of the Afghan sultans, the nobles were designated *masnad-i a'la* [lit. the elevated cushioned-seat]. Ultimately, through frequent use, the Indians converted the word into *masand*. Since the Sikhs regard the *Gurū* as the *Sachchā Pādshāh*, that is, the True King,<sup>25</sup> the latter's representative is known as *masand*, and also *Rāmdās*. During [the period of] the *Maḥals* previous to the fifth [*Gurū* Arjan], no *bheṭ*,<sup>26</sup> that is tax, was taken from the Sikhs. Whatever they, on their own, presented as offerings was accepted. In his reign, Arjan Mal



appointed a person over the Sikhs of every city so that he might collect tax and tribute from them. Through the mediation of that *masand*, people began to be enrolled as Sikhs of the *Gurū*. The great *masands*, through whose mediation a large number became Sikhs of the *Gurū*, appointed their own deputies, so that in every place and location, a person would be made Sikh of the *Gurū*, through the mediation of the agent of the *masand*, who had become a *melī* of that *masand*. They have held that the *udāsī*,<sup>27</sup> that is, a religious recluse, is not of commendable faith. Thus some Sikhs of the *Gurū* pursue agriculture; some, the profession of merchants; and some, that of service. Every one each year, according to his own resources, puts together money and takes it, by way of his offering (*nazar*), to the *masand*. The *masand* does not keep it for himself. Whatever else in that year they bring for the *masand* [himself] [as offering] for his taking the *bheṭ* to the *Gurū*'s establishment (*sarkār*),<sup>28</sup> the *masand* keeps it for himself, in case he does not have any means of livelihood himself. But if he follows a business or profession, he never touches this offering also. He brings forth everything [collected by him] and takes it to the *Gurū*. In the month of Baisākh [April-May], when the Sun is in the sign of Taurus, the *masands* assemble at the court of the *Gurū*. Of their *melīs*, whoever so desires and is possessed of the means of travel, goes with the *masand* to the *Gurū*. At the time of departure, the *Gurū* confers a turban on each of the *masands*.

Now that a little of the beliefs of the Sikhs has been written about, on the basis of research, something is written of the great men of this sect seen by me.

The sixth *Maḥal* is *Srī Gurū Hargobind*, the son of *Gurū Arjan*. When after the capture of [prince] *Khusrau*, His Majesty king Jannat Makānī Nūruddīn Muḥammad Jahāngīr punished and mulcted *Gurū Arjan Mal*, on account of his having prayed for the welfare of Prince *Khusrau*, the son of His Majesty Jannat Makānī, who had rebelled against his father, and a large amount was demanded from him [*Gurū Arjan*], he found himself powerless to pay it. He was tied up and kept [in the open] in the desert around Lāhore. He gave up his life there owing to the strong sun, summer heat and the injuries inflicted by the collectors. This happened in [A.H.] 1015 [A.D. 1606-7].<sup>29</sup> Similarly, His Majesty exiled *Shaikh Nizām Thānesari* from India for his joining, and uttering a prayer for the welfare of *Khusrau*.<sup>30</sup>

In short, after *Arjan Mal* his brother *Pirthā*,<sup>31</sup> whom his followers call "*Gurū Mihrbān*"<sup>32</sup> ['the kind *Gurū*'] sat in his place;

and today, when it is 1055 Hijri [A.D. 1645-46], *Gurū* Harjī is his successor. They call themselves “Bhagats” or Devotees of God; but the followers of *Gurū* Hargobind, the son of Arjan Mal, call them “Mīnā,” which name is regarded as derogatory among them.<sup>33</sup>

After Arjan Mal, Hargobind also made a claim to succession and sat in his father’s seat. He always accompanied the victorious camp of Jahāngīr. He encountered many difficulties. One was [i.e. arose from the fact] that he adopted the style of soldiers, and, contrary to his father’s practice, girded the sword, employed servants and took to hunting. His Majesty Jannat Makānī [Jahāngīr] sent Hargobind to Gwalior on account of the demand for the balance of the fine he had imposed on Arjan Mal. He remained in that place for twelve years. He was not allowed salted food. During that period, the *māsands* and Sikhs went and knelt down in *sijda* [i.e. with foreheads touching the ground] before the wall of the fort. At last, His Majesty Jannat Makānī, out of kindness, released the *Gurū*.

After His Majesty Jannat Makānī’s soul left the body and he died [A.D. 1627], he [Gurū Hargobind] remained in attendance on<sup>34</sup> His Majesty, Commander of the Faithful, Abū’l Muẓaffar Shihābuddin Muḥammad Ṣāhib Qir’ān Ṣānī Shāhjahān Pādshāh *Ghāzī*. Since his native place was in the territories of the Punjāb, he returned and offered good service to Yār *Khān*, the Eunuch,<sup>35</sup> who was *faujdār* in the territories of the Punjāb, and obtained many triumphs. He then returned to Rāmdāspura, [now Amritsar] in which place *Gurū* Rāmdās and Arjan Mal had built high buildings and a good tank. He had a battle with the forces of officers of His Majesty the Emperor Shāhjahān, who by His Majesty’s orders were sent against him. The *Gurū*’s baggage and goods were plundered, and leaving that place [Rāmdāspura], he went to Kartārpūr. There too a battle occurred. In this battle, Mīr Badahra and Pāyinda *Khān*, who [was] the son of Fath *Khān*,<sup>36</sup> were slain. Before it, and after it, many powerful forces were sent to attack him, but with God’s aid, he came out safe, although he lost whatever he had possessed.

From one [Sikh] named Sādh [or Sāda] I heard that a man in that battle swung his sword towards the *Gurū*. The *Gurū*, turning to him, told the swordsman: “One does not wield the sword like this. This is how one strikes”—and with that stroke he finished off the foe. One of the *Gurū*’s companions asked this writer, “What is the reason that the *Gurū*, while giving the stroke, said, ‘See, this is how one strikes!’?” I replied, “It seems to me that the *Gurū*’s

striking with the sword was only by way of instruction, since an instructor is called *gurū*; it was not by way of anger [that he said so], since that would be unworthy.”

In short, after the battle of Kartarpur he went to Phagwāra. From there, since it was difficult for him to stay in any place near Lāhore, he proceeded to Karaitpūr [Kiratpur] which is situated within the Punjāb hills. That area belonged to *Rāja* Tārāchand, who did not pursue the path of allegiance and obedience to King Shāhjahān.<sup>37</sup> The people of that area worshipped images. On the top of the mountain an image of a goddess, known as Nainā Devi has been set up.<sup>38</sup> *Rājas* and others from the territories around, going to that place, followed the custom of making a pilgrimage [to it]. When the *Gurū* settled himself there, a Sikh of his, Bhairū by name, going to the temple, broke the nose of the goddess. The *Rājas* got the news of it and complained to the *Gurū*, taking his [Bhairū's] name. The *Gurū* summoned Bhairū. Bhairu denied it. The *Rājas*' servants said, “We recognise this [man].” He replied, “O *Rājas*, ask the goddess. If she takes my name, you can kill me.” The *Rājas* said, “Fool, how can the goddess speak?” Bhairū broke into laughter, saying, “One now knows who is the fool. When she cannot prohibit anyone from breaking her own head, and cannot identify the person who has attacked her, what good do you expect from her, and why do you worship her?” The *Rājas* were put to silence.

Today most people from amongst the masses (*ri'āyā*) of that territory are the *Gurū*'s followers. In that mountainous region up to the borders of Tibet and China there is no trace of Islam. The writer was told by *Gurū* Hargobind, “In the Northern Mountains there is a *rāja* of great grandeur. At one time he sent me an envoy and enquired [through him], ‘We have heard there is a city called Delhi; what is the name of its *Rāja*, and whose son is he?’ I was astonished that he does not know the name of the Commander of the Faithful, Ṣāhib Qir'ān Ṣānī [Shāhjahān].”

He [the *Gurū*] had seven hundred horses in his stable. Three hundred battle-tested horsemen and sixty musketeers<sup>39</sup> were always in his service. Among them a set of persons occupied themselves in trade, service and work [on his behalf]. Whoever left his own place, took refuge with him.

He [the *Gurū*] was a man, firmly believing in One [God] and comprehending the Unique One. Someone asked him about the reality of the existence of the universe and condition of being and existence. He replied, “The world is a mere appearance without

[real] being, something seen without existence. The [only] Reality in it is the Supreme God; and all these physical bodies and angels are just illusions. We may recall a story of the past. There was a king who went out for *hatta joṛī*, [Hindi, 'joined hands'], which in Turki is called *qamargha* and in Persian *parra shikār* [hunting through circles of beaters].<sup>40</sup> A deer came within the troops' circle. The king said that if the deer breaks out [of the circle] in the direction of any one posted there, he should [pursue it and] not return until he has seized it. It so happened that it broke out in front of the king himself. The king rode after it, till he got far away from the troops. He reached a place beyond which, owing to the density of trees, there was no further passage. The king was happy that the deer would come back. But there was a small opening; the deer leapt through it. The king too made his horse leap after it. The horse closing upon itself passed through, but the king got caught in the tree fork and his hands and feet got so much enmeshed that you might say someone had deliberately tied him up. For two days he remained in that spot, till two persons, wife and husband, who collected dry wood, reached that place. The woman said to her husband, 'See the king has put a thief on the stake?' The man said, 'This is not the place for a thief. Let us find out.' When they went up further, they saw him and recognised him. They said to each other, 'If we release him from here, he will be of use to us.' The woman said, 'He is the king. Once he separates from us, who will let us approach him. If he establishes a connection with us and marries our daughter, we will set him free.' They told the king [of this condition]. The king agreed to this. When they got him out of that place and took him to their dwelling place, they gave their daughter to him. He remained there for some time. Then they took him to his army. When he wished to enter his palace, the doorkeeper hit him with a spear. The King trembled and woke up. He saw he was sitting on the throne. He saw in front of the throne his liegemen standing in [an attitude of] servitude. Now with this dream, he woke up from his sleep of forgetfulness. He realised that the visible world is mere appearance without [real] being: Whatever one thinks in wakefulness is also a dream. He discovered that life consists in difference of appearances and the separateness of form. In reality, the [only thing] existent is a single Substance, possessed of numerous qualities."

There is a man called Devā, a Brahman of Gobindwāl in the Punjāb, who calls himself *Gyānī*.<sup>41</sup> He went to the *Gurū* and one day sat on the *palang*, that is, the cot, of Gurdittā, who,

popularly known as Bābā Jīū, was the *Gurū's* son. People said, "Don't sit here." He asked for the reason. They replied, "This is the place of the *Gurū*." Devā said, "Perhaps, the *Gurū's* body is not made of the elements, or I do not have any command over reason. Or what he eats, I do not have the ability to eat." These words were reported to *Gurū* Hargobind. He called him and said, "O Devā, the whole universe is one existence." He replied, "Yes". The *Gurū* pointed to a donkey and said, "What is it? Do you recognise it?" Devā replied, "You are the Absolute God. It too is you."<sup>42</sup> The *Gurū* laughed and did not feel hurt.

Devā wished to marry his own sister. People said, "This is unlawful." He said, "If it were unlawful, it would not be possible for the male organ to go into the female. For, since God did not wish us to fly, He did not give us the power to fly."

The Sikhs worshipped *Gurū* Hargobind as a deity, and their belief was that he is God, who has appeared six times in this Age [*Gurū* Hargobind being the sixth *Mahāl*].

A person Parra Kaiwān by name,<sup>43</sup> hearing of his virtues, came to see the *Gurū*. The *Gurū*, not recognising him, did not pay him appropriate respect. Consequently, Parra Kaiwān went away. After becoming aware of this, the *Gurū* sent messages to him and invited him back. Parra Kaiwān did not agree to return.<sup>44</sup> A whole week had not passed after Parra Kaiwān's departure, that, on Sunday, 6 Muḥarram 1055 *Hijrī* [5 March 1645],<sup>45</sup> the *Gurū* departed from this world. When his body was put upon firewood and the pyre was lighted, and the flames rose, Rāja Rām, by name, a Rājput, threw himself into the fire: he walked a few steps through the fire in order to reach the *Gurū's* feet, and put his own head upon the soles of his feet and did not move, till life became extinct. Then a Jaṭṭ boy, who attended on the *Gurū's* son-in-law, jumped into the fire. Thereafter a number of people thought of jumping [into the fire], but *Gurū* Har Rāi stopped them. Daulat Khān Qāqshāl says: [Verses]

Out of the hundred sayings of my Guide, I remember just one:

The universe will not be desolate, so long as the wine-shop is frequented;

So long as life is given away, and the heart is stolen;

For the giving away of [one's] life and the stealing of [another's] heart, are both gifts of God.

*Gurū* Hargobind in his letters [courteously] called this writer by the title of "Nānak", who is the Teacher (*Murshid*) of this

sect.<sup>46</sup> I saw him in 1053 A.H. [A.D. 1643-44] in Kiratpur.

*Gurū* Har Rāi is the grandson of the said *Gurū*, his father being Gurditta, popularly known as Bābā Jiwan [Jiū]. *Gurū* Hargobind had earlier desired to pass on the reins of succession into his [Gurdittā's] hands. At that time *Gurū* Nāghora, who is a Sikh, (living in Sarāi Pakkā, which is situated on the route between the Punjāb and Peshāwar),<sup>47</sup> took his daughter for [marriage to] Bābā Jiū. Bābā [Jiū] wished to send her to the women's apartments [that is, marry her], but Har Rāi's mother, owing to the neglect shown to her by Bābā Jiū, wished that woman to be [married] to some other man. She went to Hargobind to complain. Having heard her, Hargobind told Bābā Jiū, "Nāghorā is one whom I have called 'my son'; my own son cannot take to wife his daughter." Nāghorā did not agree to take back his daughter and take away the marriage-bed [sent with the bride]. Owing to his insistent plea, Bābā Jiū did not reject his wish. Hargobind exclaimed, "Let this marriage tie and consummation not occur, nor be attained!" Bābā Jiū, while in the very clothes of a groom, departed from this life, and *Gurū* Nāghorā's daughter returned to her home a virgin. Thereafter the grandfather, the *Gurū*, raised Har Rāi, who was the eldest son of Bābā Jiū, with much kindness, and addressed him as Bābā Jiū. At the time of his own death, he nominated him to his own place, and had the robe of honour of succession draped on his body. He ordered his sons, family members and all persons of the household to obey him.

Har Rāi stayed in Kiratpur for one year. When in the year 1055 [A.D. 1645-46], upon King Shāhjahān's orders, Najābat Khān, son of Shāhurkh Mirzā, led an expedition, conquered Tārā Chand's territories and captured the Rāja himself,<sup>48</sup> *Gurū* Har Rāi betook himself to Thapal, in the dominions of Rāja Karm Prakāsh, near Sirhind.<sup>49</sup> The Sikhs call Har Rāi the Seventh *Maḥal*. He is very closely acquainted with this writer.

Of the reputable *masands* and pious *Rāmdās*'s ['attendants of God'] of this honoured [spiritual] line, this writer has encountered some; and he shall now write about them and describe some of the manners of this sect. They [the *Gurūs*] also call their deputies *Rāmdās*. King Jannat Makānī Jahāngīr and King Shāhjahān call the *Gurūs*, *Rāmdās*, meaning 'God-worshipper'.<sup>50</sup>

*Rāmdās* Chanda<sup>51</sup> is one of the missionaries of the *Gurū*. (He is the grandson of one named Buddh who was a disciple of Bābā Nānak).<sup>52</sup> He is a wealthy person. He does not speak to anyone, and has no concern about any one's good or bad things. One day, a foot of his had a wound. Hargobind told him, "Don't wear shoes."

Immediately on hearing these words, he took off his shoes, and for three months went bare-foot. When the *Gurū* came to know of it, he said, "Do wear [shoes]. I had only spoken [that way] to enable the wound to heal." Some days [later], one morning the *Gurū* told him, "Tell the Sikhs to bring firewood for the kitchen, so that they may obtain merit." Chanda disappeared the next day, though on other days he did not wake up from sleep till mid-day. People suspected some insanity affecting his brain. They thought he had gone out and the *Gurū* and the people went in search of him. They saw him carrying a full load of firewood on his shoulder. The *Gurū* said, "I did not order you to do so [yourself]." He replied: "You had spoken of Sikhs. I am a Sikh, and I don't know of a station above this one."

Once the *Gurū* went into a garden and asked Chanda to stand outside. By chance, the *Gurū* came out by another door and went home. Chanda stood there on foot for three days, until Hargobind heard of it and called him back.

[The following three paragraphs are from Version A.]

The *melis* of Chanda, that is, those who at his instruction have taken to the path of the *Gurū*, consider Chanda to be (their) *gurū*, to the degree that without his orders, they do not go to the *Gurū's dharm-sāl*,<sup>53</sup> and until he so orders, they do not even go to see the *Gurū*. *Dharm-sāl* is the place where the Sikhs sit and engage themselves in praising the Lord. Chanda is of Jaṭṭ lineage.

Another *Rāmdās* is Debī Chand/Dūnī Chand, son of Pirānā, the Jaṭṭ. They tell so much about the miraculous powers of Pirānā, that these cannot find space here. They say Pirānā's foot can cure any pain that medicine cannot cure. Pirānā had a shoe which still remains, and they strike with it [at the affected part]. The Sikhs believe that this secures release [from the pain]. Debī Chand himself rubs his foot on the injuries and pain-affected parts of Sikhs. Debī Chand is a religious-minded person. His kitchen is always open. But neither a Hindu nor Muslim can approach him. His seat of residence is a village near Wazīrābād in the Punjāb, known as Chak Rāmdās.

Pirānā Murārī is of the lineage of Parmānand, who had become a Sikh before the Sixth *Mahāl* [i.e. in the time of *Gurū* Arjan or earlier]. Parmānand was a man of handsome appearance and heart-captivating eye. Owing to this, women were attracted to him, and he never left off practising adulterous acts, until as a result of the increasing effect of leprosy, he had to leave his native place. He encountered a Sikh, and swore to him by the *Gurū* that he should

take him to the Gurū. He took him to the *Gurū's* seat of residence in Ranīr(?). They say that when that Sikh came near the *Gurū*, before he himself could speak out what was in his mind, the *Gurū* called out for Parmānand. When they took him to the *Gurū*, he ordered a Sikh to give his virgin daughter in marriage to him. The Sikh obeyed. After the marriage the *Gurū* called him and cast his eye of favour upon him. As a result of the affect of the grace of the *Gurū's* eye, his wounds began to heal. The *Gurū* asked him, "Show the sole of your foot to me." He did not agree [out of respect for the *Gurū*]; as a result, the affect of leprosy remained in the sole of his foot. Thereafter the *Gurū* called him his son, and appointed him to the position of a *masand*.

Bidhīā is a Jatṭ from amongst the people of Sarmālī,<sup>54</sup> which is a village near the capital city of Lāhore. In his youth he used to engage in robbery. Whoever asked him for a thing, he used to do his best to procure it for him. His house was always filled with the needy and the poor. When he came to *Gurū* Hargobind, the *Gurū* forbade him from engaging in robbery. He pleaded that if he could secure water and bread for his guests, he could abstain from that profession. The *Gurū* prayed for his welfare and gave him the position of *masand* and appointed him [to collect offerings] from the cultivated fields of people and the disciples. Now all the time there are guests in his house. Once he sent a Sikh to collect one hundred ass-loads [of grain]. When that Sikh reached the appointed place, he distributed it all among the people. When Bidhīā came to know of this, he asked him why had he done so. He said, "Had it reached your house, you would have given it to the poor and spent it in feeding guests. I too gave it away to the needy and you have been saved the cost of transport." Bidhīā was pleased with him. I have heard this story from his admirers. Kaiwān Parra, who is one of the great (spiritually) enlightened ones, says he [Bidhīā] is not possessed of these qualities, and the followers have attributed them to him out of a desire to inflate the repute of their master. But he [Bidhīā] endeavours greatly to carry out the *Gurū's* orders. He still engages in robbery along with his people. His belief is that whatever they take for the *Gurū* earns them unlimited merit. For Har Gobind has decreed, "On the Day of Judgement, my disciples will not be asked about their deeds." It is possible that now, his [sense of] compassion has declined or altogether deteriorated. People who see him now, consider these stories [about his past] to be fables.

Sādh [or Sāda] is another disciple of the *Gurū*. (He is a



Seṭhī Khatri. When he became a Sikh of the Gurū he heard that the Gurū was telling other Sikhs: "If you can, bring for me horses from the country of 'Irāq [Iran]." Sādh has his residence in Balkh.)<sup>55</sup> By the Gurū's orders, he started from Balkh towards 'Irāq [Iran] to bring horses. He had a son, who, upon reaching [Balkh], fell ill. People told [Sādh]: "You are still in Balkh, one stage of journey away from home. Do [go back and] see your son." He replied: "If he dies, there is ample firewood in the house to cremate him. I have started on the Gurū's work and will not go back." So the son passed away and he did not return. By much endeavour he brought three 'Iraqi horses, twenty-five Turki horse and one camel besides many other valuable articles. When he reached Ghorband, belonging to Kābul province, and which by orders of His Just Majesty King Shāhjahān, was under the charge of Khalil Beg, Khalil Beg seized all the three Turki horses and the camel. However much Sādh tried, it was of no use. This incident occurred in the year 1053 [A.D. 1643-44]. After Gurū Hargobind's death towards the close of this [sic! the next] year, 'Alī Qulī Beg, the son of Khalil Beg, who had been the most forward in seizing the horses, passed away, and in the year 1055 [A.D. 1645], Khalil Beg lost reputē owing to the negligence shown by him in defending the fort [of Ghorband] against the people of Balkh, whom he had provoked into fighting. Couplets:

Until someone hurts the heart of the possessor of a heart  
He is not humiliated by God  
Whomsoever God wishes to overthrow  
He makes him strike at the dervishes.<sup>56</sup>

Sādh is a man who is happy when joyful things happen, and is not given to grief from sad things. Once this writer was in his company on a journey from Kabul to the Punjāb. When we reached Ribāt, which is adjacent to the country of the Gakhars, in the morning while on the way, I said, "The fastening at the head of my leather garment is missing."<sup>57</sup> Immediately, Sādh took out his sacred thread and tied the joint at the fastening. I asked him, "Why did you do so?" He replied, "Tying the sacred thread amounts to making a pledge to serve. If I am tardy in serving friends, I should not be a sacred-thread wearer." Couplet:

This one yarn without a joint, although it is of a single line of yarn,  
Becomes a rosary in the monastic cell, and a sacred thread in the idol-temple.

[Version A adds here the following paragraph:]

Antyānan [Anantnand? – J.S.G.] Jogī is one of the

*sahlangs* of Murārī Parmānand. He lives at Shamsābād, one of the places subordinate to Aṭak Banāras [mod. Attock]. He earns his livelihood by trade and Murārī has appointed him to the position of *masand* of Atak Banāras and its dependencies. Antyānan and his father are the *Gurū*'s sincere followers, truly firm in faith. Every Sikh who comes to their house, they regard him as the *Gurū* and gird their loins to serve him.

From *Gurū* Hargobind, a Sikh enquired, "When at a distance, how do I find the *Gurū*?" He replied, "Every Sikh, who, saying *Wāhi Gurū*,<sup>58</sup> comes to your house, regard him as the *Gurū*." Among the Sikhs it is customary that every desire they have, [they put] in an assembly where the Sikhs gather. They lay whatever they can before the *masand* or a Sikh, and then ask that they [the Sikhs] should join their hands and pray towards the *Gurū*, so that the wish is attained.<sup>59</sup> The *Gurū* too similarly consults the *sangat*<sup>60</sup> or the assembly of Sikhs about his own wishes. This also is the practice of the Sipāsīs, that is, the Yazdānīs: their belief too is that when a large body of persons attends to get a thing done, it assuredly gets done, since a number of persons [acting together] obtain a total effect.

Among the Sikhs, none of the austerities and customary forms of worship of the Hindus have any currency. Thus when Pratāp Mal *Gyānī*<sup>61</sup> saw a Hindu youth who wished to become a Muslim, he told him. "Why do you become a Muslim? If you are inclined to eat everything, become a Sikh of the *Gurū* and then eat everything you wish."

The Sikhs believe that the followers of the *Gurū* will all attain heaven. Whoever takes the name of the *Gurū* and enters the house of a Sikh, they do not stop him. It is said that once a thief entered a Sikh's house uttering the name of the *Gurū*. The Sikh busied himself in entertaining him. In the morning the Sikh went out so as to have better things cooked for him. The thief found the Sikh's wife to be wearing much jewellery. Within a [short] while he killed her and, taking the articles of jewellery, stepped out. He met the man of the house on the way. The Sikh forcibly brought him back. When they reached the house, he found his wife murdered. The thief realised that the Sikh has found out [his crime]. He confessed the truth. The Sikh responded: "You did well." He closed the door of the cell, and told the neighbours: "My wife is ill." He cooked the food and ate it, and gave it to the thief. He told him, "Go out," and did not take away the jewellery from him, gifting it to him. He then cremated his wife.

Similarly, they say: There was a mendicant staying in the house of a Sikh. One day the mendicant said to the Sikh's wife. "For the *Gurū*'s sake, satisfy my lust." The woman said: "I am in some one else's possession. Restrain yourself." The mendicant, out of fear, ceased to come to the Sikh's house. The Sikh asked [his wife]: "Why does not the mendicant come inside [the house]?" The woman recounted his solicitation. The Sikh said: "Why did you reject his solicitation?" The woman went out, and pleading with the mendicant brought him home, and had intercourse with him. When in the month of Baisākh, they went to visit the *Gurū* — and that *Gurū* was a predecessor of Hargobind — the *Gurū* looked angrily at the mendicant, and said, "I strike at this [man]." The mendicant was struck with leprosy.

Similarly, they say: One of the *Gurūs*, seeing a speaking parrot, admired it. A Sikh heard of it. He went to the parrot's owner, who was a soldier, and sought the parrot from him. The soldier said, "If you give me your daughter, I'll give you the parrot." The Sikh agreed. He [the soldier] laughed and said further: "If you [also] give me your wife, the parrot is yours." The Sikh agreed and, taking the soldier home, gave him his wife and daughter. When the soldier came home and told the secret to his wife, the woman upbraided him until he gave the parrot to him [the Sikh] and [also] returned his wife and daughter to him. Joyfully, the Sikh went to the *Gurū*. End [of the story].

These things occurred before [the time of] *Gurū* Hargobind. The persons mentioned above were from amongst the notable Sikhs belonging to this sect. The writer encountered this sect in A.H. 1053 [A.D. 1643-44].<sup>62</sup>

### **Addendum**

[From sub-chapter on *Vedantists*]<sup>63</sup>

*Dabistān*, Bombay ed., p.137.

Pratāp Mal Chaḍḍa: Chaḍḍa is a sub-caste of Khatri. He is a *gyānī*, that is 'ārīf (mystic). Sīālkot is his native place. He has served 'ārīfs possessed of perfection. He does not recognise the ties of any religion or law. He regards all religions to be paths leading to the Creator. He recognises in every physical form a manifestation of the Beloved. Once, owing to some need, he became a follower of a man named Dwāra, who is the deputy of a representative of Hargobind *Nānakpanthī*, and made himself out to be a disciple of his.<sup>64</sup> Dwāra washed his feet, and thereafter the persons of that faith present there drank of that water, since

whenever they [the Sikhs] admit anyone to their own religion, they do likewise.<sup>65</sup> But, finally, some argument broke out between Pratāp Mal and Dwāra. Dwāra said to Pratāp Mal, "Yesterday, I washed your feet, that is, I made you my disciple, and today you fight with me." Pratāp Mal said, "O fool, my foot is always washed by Jatts like you, I never let my hands touch my feet." The Jatts are a lowly people in India; and Dwāra was a Jatt.

Among Nānak's followers, it is customary that when they seek the fulfilment of a wish, they put a copper coin before the teacher's representative or the teacher [himself] and state their wish. Pratāp Mal put some copper coins before one Kābuli, by name, who was the representative of Hargobind, and was in Kābul.<sup>66</sup> Folding his hands, he [Pratāp Mal] said: "I have something to ask." All the followers of Nānak [present], prayed together, according to their custom, for the wish to be accepted. Kābuli, before pronouncing [the prayed-for wish], asked, "Perhaps, you aspire to have a sight of Hargobind?" Pratāp Mal said, "It is much more valuable than this!" Kābuli asked, "What is that?" Pratāp Mal replied, "That the comedians, dancers and musicians should come from Peshāwar to Kābul, so that I may see their movements, poses and countenances!"

#### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> "Firdaus Makāni" was the posthumous title by which Bābur was remembered.
- <sup>2</sup> *Darveshī*. It could be read 'a mystic' (*darveshe*), as is done by G.S., who translates, 'a saint', but see the use of the same word a few lines below. Moreover, the context also suggests mystical feeling rather than persuasion by a person.
- <sup>3</sup> *Pawan* = air; *ahārī* = one who eats.
- <sup>4</sup> Version A makes a more detailed statement in the passage corresponding to the last four sentences and the first sentence of the next paragraph:

Nānak asserted the Oneness of God, and believed in the Bridge across Hell, the Day of Judgement, Hell-fire, Hell and Paradise and all the rules of Muhammadan Law (*Shar'-i Muḥammadi*) and the Word of God. He also forbade as unlawful things like wine and pork in the same very way as is held to be forbidden by Muslims and His Holiness Muḥammad, Peace be on him; and whatever it is permissible to eat, under Muslim law, he did not forbid, except for beef and meat. He taught that the cow be honoured, and himself abandoned eating meat. He commended all Muslims. He believed too in *avatārs* [incarnated deities], *devas* [gods], *devīs* [goddesses] and *rakhisars* [saints] of the Hindus. He also held as true what they say in respect of *sarg* [Sanskrit, *svarga*] and *narak* [Sanskrit, *naraka*], that is heaven and hell, according to their own belief, and of transmigration of souls

## Sikhism and the Sikhs

- (*tanāsukh*). But he regarded all of them [the dieties] as servants of the Unique Creator-Lord, and denied [the phenomena of] God's descent into man (*hulul*) and communion between God and man (*ittiḥād*).
- <sup>5</sup> *Ḥulūl o ittiḥād*, the word *ḥulūl* standing for God's alighting to dwell in a human soul, and *ittiḥād* for the soul's communion with God, both being sufic concepts.
- <sup>6</sup> Sentence within parentheses is added in Version A.
- <sup>7</sup> For this tradition and an appropriate verse from the *Gurū Granth Śāhib*, see Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, I, 109-10.
- <sup>8</sup> *Bābā*, Persian for 'father', whence in Hindustani, 'a holy man', has been popularly prefixed to Nānak's name; and the usage, as we see here, goes back at least to mid-17th century.
- <sup>9</sup> *Bānī*: "Word, speech, language, the devotional service of the Sikhs; a sacred utterance, usually of a holy man such as Kabir or one of the *Gurūs*" (Maya Singh, *The Punjabi Dictionary*, Lahore, 1895, s.v.)
- <sup>10</sup> The precise verse here apparently quoted from the *Gurū Granth Śāhib*, which contains Gurū Nānak's *bānī*, as well as the verses of his successors and other monotheistic preachers, has not been traced.
- <sup>11</sup> That is, devotees of *Kartār* (God, Creator).
- <sup>12</sup> So clearly spelt in both MSS of Version A. 'Sarin' in printed text is a misreading. *Gurū* Angad, according to tradition, belonged to the Trehan sub-caste of the Khatris. Sarin too is a Khatri sub-caste.
- <sup>13</sup> Thus in the Bombay ed. G.S.'s text reads "Sri Gurū."
- <sup>14</sup> *Niranjan*, void of passion, the Supreme Being.
- <sup>15</sup> Sanskrit, *Para-brahman*
- <sup>16</sup> Supreme Lord (from Sanskrit *param+Īshvar*).
- <sup>17</sup> This is the Arabic original form for what is written in the *Granth Śāhib* as *maḥala*. It is derived from the meaning of *maḥal* as station, stage of journey, and not, as Macauliffe, I, li, thinks, from *maḥalla*, a ward or quarter of a town, the *Granth Śāhib* being thereby "likened to a city"!
- <sup>18</sup> G.S. suggests *maranka* is a mistranscription of *man-mukh* (a reading supported by one MS of Version A), which in Punjabi means "self-willed; one who does not follow the advice of his guru or religious leader" (Maya Singh, *Punjabi Dictionary*, p.716). Professor Grewal suggests that the word intended may be *murankh*, a variant of *murakh*, *murakhni*, meaning a fool, idiot.
- <sup>19</sup> Sukhdeva, son of the sage Vyāsa. *Rakhīsar* means "a great man, a saint" (Maya Singh, s.v.).
- <sup>20</sup> Since from here onwards the story of *Rāja* Janak is not derived from Sikh sources, but is confessedly based on the *Yoga-vāsishṭha*, its inclusion is not very relevant here. The *Yoga-vāsishṭha* is recognised as an 'appendix' to the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Our author (*Dabistān*, Bombay ed., pp 111-12), had access to Mullā Muḥammad Šūfī's Persian translation of an abridgement of the full Sanskrit work made by "a Kashmirī Brahman". This translation was considered inadequate when under Dārā Shukoh's patronage a full translation was made by Ḥabibullāh in 1655-56 (See *Tarjuma-i Jog Bāshishṭ*, text, eds. Tara Chand and S.A.H. Abidi, Aligarh, 1968). This fresh translation came too late for its being used by the author of the *Dabistān*.
- <sup>21</sup> The four ages (*yuga*), viz. *Sat-jug*, *Tretā-jug*, *Dwāpar-jug*, and *Kal-jug* are respectively the *Satya Yuga*, *Treta Yuga*, *Dvāpara Yuga* and *Kali Yuga* of Purāṇic mythology.

- <sup>22</sup> The negative *na-shumarda/nashumrad* is clear in both MSS of Version A. The printed text has *bi-shumrad*, 'considers, regards', etc., in the positive, which must be an error for *na-shumrad*, the dot having been placed below, instead of above, the initial letter. If we accept *bi-shumrad* and translate as G.S. does, it would mean that, except for the single man whom the author has just quoted, no Sikh among those met by the author had claimed Bābā Nānak to be God. But the Sikh, said to be an exception, is quoted above by the author himself as explicitly saying that Nānak was "an intimate servant of God," and so not God himself. Moreover, it has been stated a little earlier that Sikhs have begun to say "that Nānak is God," so that a general Sikh belief to this effect is implied. The *Gurū Granth Sāhib* contains a verse of Gurū Arjan (quoted by J.S. Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, Cambridge, 1990, p. 57), which shows that the near-unanimous belief of the Sikhs, as reported by our author, had now scriptural sanction: "Do not be misled by his human form; the Gurū is the veritable God (*niranjan*)."
- <sup>23</sup> Punjabi for friend, companion; associated, connected.
- <sup>24</sup> Both MSS of Version A read *sahlang*, not *shahlang* as in the printed text. G.S. suggests mistranscription for *satsang*, true fellowship (Maya Singh, p.1025), but in that case one would expect the form *satsangi*, one who belongs to the *satsang*. As Professor Grewal points out in the Introduction (note no.26), *sahlang* occurs in the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, a fact recognized by Ganda Singh himself (*Mākhaz-i Tawārīkh-i Sikhān*, Amritsar, 1949, p.34), and should mean "a person or *sangat* linked with the Gurū through a masand."
- <sup>25</sup> *Sachchā*, true.
- <sup>26</sup> Lit. 'a sacrifice, an offering' (Maya Singh, s.v. *bheṭ*).
- <sup>27</sup> From *udās*, retirement, renunciation. Besides meaning "one who has retired from the world," *udāsī* was also the name given to mendicants of "an order founded by a son of Gurū Nānak" [Sri Chand] (Maya Singh, s.v. *udāsī*).
- <sup>28</sup> *Sarkār* signified in the seventeenth century the establishment, administrative, financial or fiscal, of the king, prince or noble. It also was the designation of a territorial division below the *ṣūba* or province. It did not necessarily mean sovereign government.
- <sup>29</sup> These details may be compared with those given in the contemporary reports of the Jesuit fathers at the Mughal court (C.H. Payne, tr., *Jahāngīr and the Jesuits, ... from the Relations of Father Fernao Guerreiro*, London, 1930, pp.11-12, and the traditional Sikh accounts, as set out in Macauliffe, III, pp.87-100. In the latter his death is said to have taken place in Jeth 1663 V.S., or June 1606 (ibid., p.100). This would fall in Muḥarram-Ṣafar 1015 A.H.
- <sup>30</sup> This theologian needs to be identified. He cannot be 'Abdu'l Quddūs Gangohi's well-known *khalīfa*, or successor, Shaikh Nizāmu'ddīn Thānesarī, who had died early in 1582.
- <sup>31</sup> That is, Pirthiā of Sikh tradition, his formal name being Prithi Chand. See Macauliffe, IV, pp.1 ff., for Pirthiā's animosity to his younger brother, Gurū Arjan.
- <sup>32</sup> 'Mihirvān' in Version A.
- <sup>33</sup> Maya Singh, s.v. *mīnā*: 'A bull or ox with the horns inclined downwards along the face; a nickname given by the Sikh Gurūs to those who pretended to be Gurūs, but were unfit for the noble work, as *mīnā masandā*.'

- <sup>34</sup> “*dar bandagī-i...*” The term *bandagī* need not have the definite sense of service, and probably implies no more than that the *Gurū* remained in the suit of the Imperial camp.
- <sup>35</sup> No reference to this personage is indexed in M. Athar Ali, *Apparatus of Empire: Awards of Ranks, Offices and Titles to the Mughal Nobility (1574-1658)*, New Delhi, 1985.
- <sup>36</sup> None of these persons are indexed in Athar Ali, *Apparatus*. Pāyinda Khān appears in Sikh tradition as a renegade, who led the Mughal troops against the *Gurū*; he was killed after a personal combat with the *Gurū* (Macauliffe, IV, pp.208-9).
- <sup>37</sup> This must be the ruler of this name, who had his capital at Kot Kahlur (Bilaspur State). He was the son and successor of Kalyan Chand. He is assigned a short reign, c. 1645, and is said to have built the fort of Taragarh (J. Hutchison, and J.Ph. Vogel, *History of the Punjab Hill States*, Lahore, 1933, II, p.501).
- <sup>38</sup> The temple of Nainā Devī stands on the highest point of the Naina Devi *dhar* (hill range), at the altitude of 3,595 feet, in old Bilaspur State (Hutchison and Vogel, II, p. 494).
- <sup>39</sup> Aligarh MS, Univ. Coll. Box 2, No.2, f.140a giving Version A, reads *bandūqchī*; Aligarh MS F.200/1 *Shu'ba-i 'Am*, f.78, has *tufangchī*. The printed text has *topchī*, gunner, which must be a slip.
- <sup>40</sup> *Qamargha* is considered a variant (used in Persian, Turkish and Arabic languages), of the Persian word *qamargāh*, meaning “the hunting ring formed to enclose the game” (Steingass, s.v.). *Parra* means “a circular disposition of troops for hunting or other purposes” (ibid, s.v.) and so *parra-shikār* would mean the same thing as *qamargha*.
- <sup>41</sup> Or *gayānī*, one possessing divine knowledge. Version A adds the information that Devā belonged to Gobindwal.
- <sup>42</sup> Version A gives Devā's reply as follows: “You are Gurū Parmeshar [*Parmesvar*], i.e. you are God. This [the ass] too is You. Since God is all-comprehensive (*muḥīṭ*). Existence is His alone; all else is non-existent.” Alig. MS Box 2, No.2 being corrupt here, the reading of the other Aligarh MSS is here adopted.
- <sup>43</sup> So in Version A, which we follow in the initial lines of this paragraph. The printed text calls him Parra Kaiwān Yazdānī. “Yazdānī” was one of the names of the Sipāsī sect of the Parsis founded by Āzar Kaiwān (d. A.H.1027/A.D.1618), to which the author of the *Dabistān* himself belonged. This sect was influenced by the *Ishrāqī* philosophy of Shihābuddīn *Maqtūl*. Rejecting sectarian differences, the Sipāsīs pursued contacts with all religious faiths. See the account of the sect and its major figures in *Dabistān*, Bombay ed., pp.3-44. In his account of the Bairāgīs, the author (printed text, p.161) tells us that “Parra Kaiwān Yazdānī, who is one of the great (mystically) enlightened ones, displays himself in the garb of every sect.” He cites his report on the Bairāgīs, just as in Version A, he records his comment on Bidhā, one of the leading followers of Gurū Hargobind.
- <sup>44</sup> So reads Version A. The printed text, which omits the last sentence, appears to say that the *Gurū* did pay the visitor adequate respect, but this is owing to a misreading of two words, *bi-shanākht* for *na-shanākht* and *pardākht* for *na-pardākht*, both due to a misplacing of dots. The word *lā-jarm* in the printed text is indication enough that the verbs in question should be in the negative. Version A, in any case, establishes what the author intended to say.

- <sup>45</sup> The text reads *siyūm* (third) Muḥarram, not *shashum* (sixth), but a transcriptional confusion between the two is possible. Version A has *siyūm*, which standing for 'a third' cannot be confounded with *shashum*. 3 Muḥarram 1055 could not have been a Sunday. G.S. suggests, in view of Sikh "chronologies", that the year itself is wrong: it ought to be 1054. 3 Muḥarram 1054 could have been a Sunday, if the previous month was extended to 30 days. The date would then be 13 March 1644.
- <sup>46</sup> The text in both MSS of Version A here is the same as in the printed ed. I have found no variation in the third MS of Version A (Aligarh: Fārsiya Akhbar 8), and two MSS of the text carried in the printed version (Aligarh: Shaifta Coll., F126/96 and Sir Shah Sulaiman Coll. 612/1). G.S. suggests that the author intended to say that the Gurū "remembered [himself] by the title 'Nānak'." But the construction of the sentence is such that the insertion of a word like *khwud* (himself), as proposed by G.S., would not be enough. One would also have to read *makātīb ba- namānigār* ('letters to the writer' for *makātīb nāmanigār*. Since these would amount to rather extensive interference with the text, another solution is to suppose that *nāmanigār* here does not mean the author of the *Dabistān*, but simply means the writer of the letters, i.e. the Gurū himself: "Gurū Hargobind in his letters remembered the writer thereof [i.e. himself] by the title of Nānak...." Such a rendering, though possible, seems unnatural and forced, especially with the expression, *yād farmūd* ('remembered'). The natural meaning is as given in our translation, the Gurū having so addressed him through an excess of courtesy, aided by his belief in pantheism, as reported by the author. But as Professor Grewal observes, it is "unthinkable" that the Gurū would have called someone else Nānak. We must assume that the Gurū possibly wrote to our author in Punjabi or in a Hindi dialect, and a misunderstanding arose out of a confusion between the name of the addresser and the addressee.
- <sup>47</sup> Words in parentheses added from Version A. Professor Grewal observes that Sarāi Pakkā must be the place of this name mentioned by Ganesh Dās as belonging to *tappa & pargana* Dangli in the Sindh Sagar Doab.
- <sup>48</sup> There seems to be no account of this invasion in official Mughal sources. Hutchison and Vogel, II, p.501, also make no reference to any Mughal invasion or to Tārā Chand's captivity. They say, however, that during his time "inroads were made into the country and much territory was lost to the neighbouring States." Najābat Khān's career is traceable in Athar Ali, *Apparatus* (S 121, etc): Mirzā Shujā', son of Mirzā Shāhrukh, received the title of Najābat Khān in 1628-29. He was posted for a little over a year as *faujdār* of Kangra in 1634-35. He took part in the campaign against Jagat Singh of the hill state of Nurpur, north-west of Kangra in 1641-2. But early in the summer of 1645 he is listed among the officers ordered to proceed to Kābul from where he went on to participate in the Balkh and Badakhshān expedition (Lāhori, *Pādshāhnāma*, Bib. Ind., II, p.424). Thus, it is difficult to see how Najābat Khān could have been conducting a campaign in the Punjāb hills during the year 1645. Perhaps the campaign actually occurred in 1644, the author's dates being too late here by one year, as is possibly the case with that of Gurū Hargobind's death.
- <sup>49</sup> The principality to which Gurū Har Rāi moved was Sirmur, of which



Rāja Karm Prakāsh was the ruler, though his reign period is given as 1616-30, and the current ruler must have been Mandhātā Prakāsh (1630-47) (M.S. Ahluwalia, *History of Himachal Pradesh*. New Delhi, 1988, p.108). Thapal cannot be satisfactorily identified. There is no reference to *Gurū* Har Rāi's journey into Sirmur in the traditional accounts, as summarized by Macauliffe, IV, 275-314.

- <sup>50</sup> This entire paragraph is rendered from Version A. The printed ed. reads 'Rāmdes' for 'Rāmdās' later in the paragraph and says it means 'God of the idol-worshipper', reading *khudā'i but-parast* instead of *khudā'ī parast*. Both the form 'Rāmdes' and its meaning as given in the printed text are obvious slips.
- <sup>51</sup> So in Version A. Printed text reads Jhanda for Chanda.
- <sup>52</sup> Statement in parentheses added in Version A. Budha (spelt 'Bodh') must be the famous Bhāi Budha (cf. Macauliffe, I, p.135).
- <sup>53</sup> Cf. India Library (London) MS Panjabi B40, an 18th-century transcript of a 17th-century *janam-sākhī* (quoted by W.H. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, Delhi, 1975, p.31): "the *dharamsālā*, where the Sikhs sang hymns and performed *kīrtan* [singing hymns in praise of God]."
- <sup>54</sup> 'Bidhiā', 'Bidhiā', in the text, but 'Bidhiā' in Version A. G.S.'s suggestion that the dots have been misplaced in the printed text, and Bidhiā should be read, is, therefore, legitimate. In Sikh tradition his name is given as Bidhi Chand (Macauliffe, IV, pp.153-78). This entire paragraph is from Version A. In the printed text the account of Bidhiā is greatly abridged. As for Sarmālī, Professor Grewal suggests it could possibly be Sarhali, on the road from Harikē to Tarn Taran, not very far from Lahore.
- <sup>55</sup> The portion in parentheses is inserted from Version A.
- <sup>56</sup> The incident involving *Khalil Beg* is translated here from Version A. The printed text is much shorter and does not indicate the place or date of the incident, and mentions only three 'Irāqī horses as having been brought by Sādh. During 1642-45, *Khalil Beg* was the *thānedār* (commander of military post) of *Ghorband* and *qil'a-dār* (castellan) of *Zuḥḥāk*, on the route connecting Balkh with Kābul (Athar Ali, *Apparatus*, S.2902,2948,3212); and in 1647-9 he was the commandant of Kahmard further north on the same route, a place occupied during Shāhjahān's *Balkh* expedition (S.4278, 4458). G.S., p.22n., is, therefore, mistaken in placing the seizure of these horses at Lāhore. *Khalil Beg*'s misery after this incident must have been short-lived, because in 1652-53 we find him possessed of the title of *Ri'āyat Khān*, and of the office of the *Bakhshī* of *aḥādīs* (Athar Ali, *Apparatus*, S. 5778).
- <sup>57</sup> I have followed Version A in rendering this sentence, it having more details than the printed text.
- <sup>58</sup> I have followed Version A here. The printed text has "taking the Name", instead of "saying *Wāhi Gurū*". The sanctity of the word *wāh* (literally, an expression of admiration or praise), to be used for God/*Gurū* alone, is proclaimed in the hymns of *Gurū* Amardās (Macauliffe, II, pp.207-09). *Wāhi Gurū*, or simply, *Wāh Gurū*, is usually held to mean 'the Great God' (cf. *ibid.*, IV, p.135).
- <sup>59</sup> For this practice see also the Addendum to this chapter, and the quotation from a 17th-century *janam-sākhī* and comment thereon in W.H. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, pp.31-2.

## SIKH HISTORY FROM PERSIAN SOURCES

- <sup>60</sup> Both MSS carrying Version A clearly read *sangat*; the printed text has *sang*, clearly a slip.
- <sup>61</sup> A contemporary of the author of the *Dabistān*. See the Addendum to this chapter.
- <sup>62</sup> Last sentence added in Version A.
- <sup>63</sup> In version A, this passage is in a sub-section on "*Gyānīs*," and follows the account of the Sikhs.
- <sup>64</sup> In Version A, this statement is made thus: 'At one time he [Chañḍa] became a Sikh under *B[h]āī* Dwāra, who is the *masand* of Kābul on behalf of Jhanda[=Chanda] *Rāmdās*.' Jhanda/Chanda was, as shown in the main account of the Sikhs, a leading follower of Gurū Hargobind.
- <sup>65</sup> Version A says this still more forcefully: "When they make anyone a Sikh, they wash his feet, and pass on the water to the [other] Sikhs so that all may drink of it, and this they regard as a curative." But the *charnāmat* ceremony requires the novice to wash the preceptor's feet and drink the water; it is curious that in this description the roles are reversed (J.S.G.).
- <sup>66</sup> Version A says shortly: "Kābulī by name, the *masand* of Kābul."

## 4

# A Visit to the Tomb of Gurū Nānak before 1647

From Śūrāt Singh, *Taẓkira Pīr Ḥassū Telī*

*Translated by S. Ali Nadeem Rezavi*

The *Taẓkiratu'sh Shaikh wa'l-Khadam*, also known as *Taẓkira Pīr Ḥassū Telī*, is a metrical work written in the Panjab in the reign of Shāhjahān. It survives in a unique manuscript, possibly autograph, in the Library of the Centre of Advanced Study in History, Aligarh Muslim University. Its author began writing it in A.H. 1055 (A.D. 1644-45) and completed it in A.H. 1057 (A.D. 1647) (MS, ff.181b-182a).

The author, Śūrāt Singh, was of the Kambo caste, the son of Dūnī Chand, and born at Natesar in *pargana* Patti Haibatpūr (now Patti) in the Punjab. His family were by profession traders, but Śūrāt Singh took to the career of a revenue official, holding posts at Lahore, Bhaṭinda and other places. After his father's death, when he was passing through difficult times, he and his brother Gangā Rām were taken by Shaikh Sitrullāh to Shaikh Kamāl, the chief disciple of Pīr Ḥassū, the oilman (*telī*) saint (d.1603), to be enrolled among his disciples. This was a ṣūfī sect, formally *Malāmatyas*, to which both Hindus and Muslims were admitted.

For Śūrāt Singh's *Taẓkira* which is partly an autobiography, partly an account of the miraculous powers of Pīr Ḥassū and Shaikh Kamāl, M. Athar Ali's essay on the work in *Medieval India: a Miscellany*, II, Aligarh/ Bombay, 1972, pp.187-94, is a very good guide. From

the *Tazkira* it becomes apparent that Gurū Nānak's religious status was widely accepted in 17th-century Punjab; and he was popular among both Hindus and Muslims. From the *Tazkira* references to Gurū Nānak and the power and popularity of his verses, it is clear that Šūrat Singh held him to be a great teacher and a master of "Hindī verses" (f.142b). He writes that at a time when his brother was removed from the post of revenue-collector ('*āmīl*') at Jahangirpur, his mother took him to the "village of Bābā Nānak" where they visited his "marī" (*marhī*, funereal shrine). A translation of this portion, Aligarh MS, ff.122b-123a, is offered below. From this it becomes clear that at least till 1647 a shrine and a tomb of the Gurū was extant on the banks of the River Ravi at Kartārpūr. The popular Sikh legend that both these monuments were washed away providentially so as to avoid idolatrous worship of the Gurū's last resting-place, may be correct; but the event would seem to have taken place after 1647, for had the shrine disappeared by the time Šūrat Singh was composing his work, he would probably have referred to the fact.

According to the Sikh tradition, Gurū Nānak did not leave behind two bodies, as related to Šūrat Singh by the shrine's attendants. Rather, when the time for Gurū Nānak's parting from this world arrived, and the Muslims wanted to bury him and the Hindus to cremate him, Gurū Nānak told them: "Let the Hindus place flowers on my right and the Musalmans on my left. They whose flowers are found fresh in the morning (after my death), may have the disposal of my body." The Gurū then drew a sheet over himself and departed from this world. When the sheet was removed the next morning it was found that the Gurū's body had miraculously disappeared and the flowers placed on both sides were in bloom. The blooms were then divided and partly cremated and partly buried. (See Macauliffe, *Sikh Religion*, I, pp.190-91).

From the *Tazkira* it also appears that there was a belief widely held among people like Šūrat Singh that the spirit of Gurū Nānak had become one with the other great spirits. From two of his mystical experiences Šūrat Singh claims that Gurū Nānak and Pīr Ḥassū Telī had become one. He says (ff.142b-143a, 159a-b) that once he was performing the *ṭawāf* (circumambulation) of the

*dargāh* of his *Pīr* (*Ḥassū Telī*) when 'Bābā Nānak' passed that way. On seeing him performing the circumambulation, a person stopped him and enquired about the mystery (*asrār*) of the graves there. When Śūrāt Singh informed him about *Pīr Ḥassū*, *Shaiḵh Kamāl* and *Sitrullāh* and their miracles, he exclaimed, "Yes, if a beggar (*gadā*) begets treasure, he starts performing like a professional dancer". And then he started reciting some of his own "Hindī" verses (*sha'r-i hindī*) which were fit for the occasion. While he was doing so his eyes were sparkling; and on hearing and seeing this, it occurred to Śūrāt Singh that this person was no other than "Gurū Nānak". But then his own *Pīr* whispered to him: "O the knower of mysteries, the truth is that he was not Nānak. If you see with the eyes of belief, then you will realize it is I who comes before your eyes time and again." Śūrāt Singh says that he took this person to be Nānak because of his way of recitation and his great verses. But then his *Pīr* warned him, "I tell you, it was not Nānak but I! Whoever becomes your guide, it is I!" Does it, then, mean that Śūrāt Singh wants to convey the message that the teachings of Gurū Nānak and his own *pīr* were the same, and that they were united in spirit?

At most of the places in his *Tazkira* Śūrāt Singh generally refers to Gurū Nānak as 'Bābā Nānak'. It is only at one place (f.142b) that he refers to him as "Gurū Nānak".

Śūrāt Singh's work is an important historical document for understanding how the message of Gurū Nānak was looked at by the mystically inclined in the Panjab. It is one of the first statements in Persian on the Sikh message, it belongs to just about the time the author of the famous account in the *Dabistān-i Mazāhib* was collecting his material on Sikhism. For this reason it should surely be of interest to students of Sikh history.

The translation of the account of the author's visit to Gurū Nānak's shrine now follows.

# TRANSLATION

*Tazkira*, Aligarh MS, ff.122b-123a

My mother took hold of my hand and started the journey; we went to the village (*deh*) of Bābā Nānak.

The attendants of the Blessed Shrine (*ḥarīm*) gave the intelligence about him that that beneficent one came by one [the true] path and never came by another.

When we bowed our heads for pilgrimage to [the shrine of] the Bābā, [we saw that] there was a *marī* [*marhī*, funereal shrine], and by the side of the *marī*, was his tomb (*mazār*).

Who can come between the pure body (*jism-i pāk*) and its frame (*mān*) (lit. house) of dust? For the life of those whose hearts have life, an arrow turns into a mere thorn!

They become bodies of air when they are reduced to dust [if they are buried on death] and acquire the form of water, if they are thrown into fire [i.e. are cremated].

## Account of the Death of Bābā Nānak ...

How from the house do you take the warp? [It is] from the shrine of the spiritually-sighted ones, [that] the collyrium for the eyes [comes].

From their presence, the dust becomes collyrium, and they leave in poor state, who draw their skirt through that dust like wind or smoke.

I sought from those serving the *marī*, the mystery of the shrine of the Bābā. A narrator of the tradition gave me an account of it.

That when he [Gurū Nānak] died, leaving this for another abode, Hindus and Muslims gathered around the Bābā's head.

The Hindus said that he was a Hindu, and thus he ought to be cremated. The assemblage of Muslims desired to make a grave for him.

Two bodies of his thereupon came to view: One they took and cremated; and the other was put in front for the [Muslim] funeral prayer.

[But] he left both his bodies and went across to the other side of River Ravi. There an Afghan disciple (*murīd*) had the privilege of a sight of him.

He [Nānak] laid out before him a floor-cloth containing a variety of eatables. The Afghan ate his fill from that laid-out meal.

As is the convention of old, he [the Afghan] spoke and cried out about the ordeal of his journey, in soldierly talk that night.

When that traveller crossed over to this side of the river, he saw the grave and the flames of cremation.

He asked, "Why are these people making all this noise"? [Someone] replied: "Nānak has passed away from this world!".

"The amazing thing is," [he was told,] "that after his death, there came to be two bodies. One is being buried and the other is being cremated".

[The Afghan] said that both [Muslims and Hindus] have done wrong: "I have seen him well settled on the other side of the river".

"I have eaten food and fruits and have talked with him and I have come to this side after taking leave from him."

All became astonished on hearing this and the report of his [Nānak's] moving himself to another place became well known.

Having taken the benefit from the dust of his pure tomb, whose name is *shukr* (thanksgiving), we returned contented to our home.

## 5

# The Sikhs and Their History, 1696 From Sujān Rāi Bhaṇḍārī, *Khulāṣatu't Tawārīkh*

*Translated by Iqbal Husain*

Sujān Rāi Bhaṇḍārī's *Khulāṣatu't Tawārīkh*, completed in A.H.1107/Aurangzeb's 40th Regnal Year, corresponding to A.D. 1696, is a history of India, that comes down to the War of Succession, 1658-59. The historical narrative is preceded by an account of India and the provinces of the Mughal Empire, each separately described.

The main account of the Sikhs and their history is given in the chapter on the province of Lahore, which runs from p.64 to 80 in M. Zafar Hasan's ed., Delhi, 1918. Jadunath Sarkār had translated this portion in his *India of Aurangzib*, Calcutta, 1901, pp.80-91, working only from MSS. Except in part, his translation was found to be in need of much improvement and so most of it has practically been recast in the rendering given below. The Addendum includes extracts from other parts of the same work, relevant to Sikh history, most of which are from portions not translated by Sarkār. The annotation has also been done afresh; Zafar Hasan's ed. has been used throughout.

Sujān Rāi was a native of Baṭāla (near Lahore, now on the Indian side of the border) and may, therefore, be expected to have been well informed about the Punjab.

In this, as in many subsequent Persian texts, the word *gurū* is spelt *gorū* (the form also prevalent in pre-1947 Urdu of Sikh writers), presumably to prevent it being confounded with other words in the absence of marks



for short vowels in ordinary Persian writing. The precaution being unnecessary in English, the word is transliterated as *guru* in our translation.

## TRANSLATION

Text, pp.69-70

Twelve *kurohs* (*kos*) from Baṭāla on the bank of the river Rāvi, is the place of Bābā Nānak, whose descendants are still [A.D.1696] living there. In his own days, he was the leader of the caravan in the path of Truth, the torch-bearer in the course of ṣūfic path, the manifestation of the splendour of God and the beholder of the illuminations of Infinite Secrets. He composed Hindi<sup>1</sup> verses revealing the Truth of the Absolute God in lucid words and clear metaphors. It is said that this chosen one of the world was born at Talwandī Rāi Bhoṇa [rect. Bho'a], in the year 1526 of Vikramajit, corresponding to 880 A.H. (1469 A.D.), in the reign of Sultan Bahlol Lodī, and lived at the same place in his maternal grandfather's house.<sup>2</sup> Since from the beginning of Eternity he was destined to enjoy access to the bounties of God, he exhibited, from a young age,<sup>3</sup> signs of the innate knowledge and miracles and the practising of uncommon habits. A large number of people came to believe in him. After travelling through many parts of the world, he came to Baṭāla, got married there and settled in one of the villages of Baṭāla on the bank of the river Rāvi. The fame of his knowledge of God and the effect of his sayings became widely reputed and multitudes of people from all parts and lands came to him and became his disciples. One of his close companions was a singer named Mardāna, who brought men into the ties of faith by setting to music and singing in a captivating manner the verses of [Nānak,] that intimate one of the Court of the Creator. This leader of God-seeing men, left the transitory world, at the age of 70 to 80 years during the reign of Salīm Shāh Afghān.<sup>4</sup> Though he had his elder son, named Lakhmidās,<sup>5</sup> yet, as he had not been endowed with spiritual worth, Nānak at the time of his death appointed as his successor a Khatri named Lahina *alias* Trehan,<sup>6</sup> who was a constant and close companion of his, giving him the title of *Gurū* Angad. He [Angad] occupied the sacred seat for a period of thirteen years before passing away. As he had no son,<sup>7</sup> he appointed his son-in-law [sic!] Amardās, *alias* Bhella,<sup>8</sup> as his own successor. He guided the people for twenty-two years and then died. Although he had sons, yet at the time of passing away, he nominated as his successor his son-in-law Rāmdās, *alias* Sodhī,<sup>9</sup>

who received the adoration of his disciples for seven years. After him *Gurū* Arjan, his son, occupied the sacred seat. After twenty-five years he passed away. Then, after him, *Gurū* Hargobind, his elder son, adorned the seat for thirty-seven years. When he died, *Gurū* Har Rāi, whose father Gordita [Gurdittā] by name, had died in the life-time of *Gurū* Hargobind, succeeded his grandfather, and for seventeen years acted as the guide of the believers. After him, his young son, *Gurū* Har Kishan, sat on the sacred seat for three years. Then *Tegh Bahādur*, the younger son of *Gurū* Hargobind, occupied the seat for fifteen years. In the end he was imprisoned under Imperial officers; and in 1081 A.H. [A.D.1670-71], corresponding to the 17th regnal year of 'Ālamgīr [A.D.1673-74],<sup>10</sup> he was executed at Shāhjahānābād [Delhi] in accordance with 'Ālamgīr's orders. At the time of writing this book, *Gurū* Gobind Rāi,<sup>11</sup> the son of *Gurū* *Tegh Bahādur*, has been in occupation of the sacred seat for twenty-two years.

To be brief, among the followers of Bābā Nānak there are many mystics, discourses, ascetics and prayerful men. The essence of the worship of this sect is the reading of the verses of their Guide, which they sing with instrumental and vocal music and with a heart-ravishing chant. They remove from one's mind the anguish caused by [worldly] attachments and lift the obscuring veil of impediments from the heart. In their eyes, kinsmen and strangers are alike, friends and enemies are the same. They are wholly one with their friends and do not quarrel with their enemies. The faith which this sect has in its leader is seldom seen in other sects. In the name of their Guide, which they continually have on their tongue, they consider it a great act of worship to attend on travellers. If a person arrives at midnight and takes the name of Bābā Nānak, though he be a stranger and unknown person, even a thief, robber, or person of evil conduct, they treat him as a brother and friend and serve him in a manner proper to his needs.

### Addendum

#### Miscellaneous Notices

I

Text, pp.22-23

The Mendicants (*Durweshān*) of India.

The first class, *Sanyāsīs* ... Second class, *Jogīs* ... Third class, *Bairāgīs* ... Fourth class, *Udāsīs*:<sup>12</sup> the followers of Bābā Nānak, [who] in accordance with the way and custom of their Master occupy themselves in praising and glorifying the Creator.

The essence of their worship consists of the reading of the verses of their Guide (*murshid*), which they recite, set to music and song, and raise a heart-captivating chant, making both themselves and their listeners [feel] fortunate and joyful.

Fifth class, Jain and Seora ...

## II

Text, p.36.

[Account of Province of Delhi]

Nānak Matā<sup>13</sup> is a place where the disciples and followers of Bābā Nānak assemble and offer worship. In that direction lie the Northern Mountains which they call Kumāūn.

## III

Text, p.76

[Account of the Lahore Province]

The river Sutlej comes from the Mountains of Bhūtānt [Tibet], and flows through the country of Kullū-Bashahr. Thereafter it makes its way to the Sirkhad Hills<sup>14</sup> within the limits of Kahlūr. It protects that country from three sides. The ruler of Kahlūr, from the protection of this river, the difficult ranges and the strength of his place of residence — for the town of Bilāspūr is his capital — offers defiance to the Imperial officers. Coming out of that mountain, the river divides into two branches, passing below Makowāl [mod. Anandpur-Sahib] which is the place of residence of Gurū Gobind Rāi,<sup>15</sup> and Kiratpūr, where Gurū Hargobind and Gorū Har Rāi had resided. It becomes one river before reaching Rūpar.

## IV

Text, p.425

[Akbar's meeting with Gurū Arjan]

Departing from Lahore... [Akbar] crossed the Beās river. He visited the house of Gurū Arjan, the successor of Bābā Nānak, who was highly reputed for his knowledge of God. He was pleased from listening to his recitation of the Hindī verses that had been composed by Bābā Nānak for expounding the knowledge of God. Deeming it to be an honour conferred on him, Gurū Arjan made a suitable offering and pleaded that since, owing to the coming of the Victorious Army to the Punjab, grain prices had risen and the *jāma'* [land-tax demand] of the localities (*parganas*) had been raised, now that the Imperial Army is leaving, the grain prices

have fallen, and the peasants are [therefore] unable to meet their obligation to pay the *jāma* '. In accordance with his plea, orders were issued to the Imperial Finance Ministers that a reduction of twelve-to-ten<sup>16</sup> be made in the *jama* ' and the revenue-collectors be instructed to grant remissions to the peasants accordingly and not to make demands on them in excess [of the amount now prescribed]...<sup>17</sup>

## V

Text, p.5B

[Dārā Shukoh at Lahore, after his flight from battle of Samūgar]

Although Dārā Shukoh put up an appearance of preparations for a fight, at heart he was a prey to demoralization and fear. He thought it to be beyond his power to face the Imperial Army [of Aurangzeb] in battle, and entertained the design of proceeding to Multān and Qandahār.<sup>18</sup> This he indicated to his close courtiers and confidants through hints and allusions. People intuitively realised that once [Aurangzeb's] glorious camp moved in this direction, he [Dārā Shukoh] would take to flight without daring to enter battle. As a result, they decided to separate from him. Thus Rāja Rājrup<sup>19</sup> departed with the excuse that he needed to go to his native territory (*waṭan*) to gather troops and conciliate the local chiefs (*zamīndārs*) of the [Punjab] Hills. From expediency, he left his son as his agent at Lahore; but after some days, his son also departed one night. So too Gurū Har Rāi, the successor of Bābā Nānak, who had come with a large force, left on the excuse of collecting [more] troops. Thus most people separated themselves from Dārā Shukoh...

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> The designation 'Hindi' or 'Hindawi' was used for *any* local Indian language and thus applied to Punjābī as well as other dialects, such as Braj or Awadhī.
- <sup>2</sup> The date of birth given here corresponds to the one given in the Sikh tradition (Macauliffe, I, p.1). The name of the *zamīndār* of the village was Rāi Bular (Macauliffe, I, p.2) which is apparently a variant of the name "Rāi Bhona" given in our text. Talvandi is now Nānkana Śāhib, renamed after Gurū Nānak. It is in the District of Lahore, Pakistan.
- <sup>3</sup> MS var. 'from the age of ten years'.
- <sup>4</sup> Tradition, however, assigns his death to 1538 (Macauliffe, I, 191), while Salīm [Islām] Shāh reigned from 1545-53. One also gets 1539 if one totals up the periods of Gurūships of Nānak's successors, as

given by Sujān Rāi, up to the death of Gurū Arjan, and deducts the total from A.D. 1606, the known date of the latter's martyrdom.

<sup>5</sup> "Lakshmichand" of Sikh tradition.

<sup>6</sup> A Khatri sub-caste.

<sup>7</sup> Gurū Angad, according to tradition, had two sons, Dāsu and Dātu, and the latter claimed to succeed his father thereby denying Gurū Amardās's claims (Macauliffe, II, pp. 1, 63).

<sup>8</sup> That is, Bhalla, the name of a Khatri sub-caste.

<sup>9</sup> A Khatri sub-caste.

<sup>10</sup> As the editor notes, the Hijri and regnal years do not correspond. A little further on, the author tells us that Gurū Gobind Singh had already reigned as Gurū for 22 years. Since Sujān Rāi was writing in 1696, this gives 1674 as the year of Gurū Gobind Singh's accession and so presumably of Gurū Tegh Bahādur's martyrdom. The date preserved in Sikh tradition is Maghar Samvat 1732 or A.D. 1675 (Macauliffe, IV 387).

<sup>11</sup> Note that the author does not use the suffix "Singh" for the Gurū, which he had not assumed at this time (1696).

<sup>12</sup> *Undāsīs* in the text. The term *Udāsī* (from *udās*, renunciation, sorrowful) came to be applied to the sect of recluses established by Gurū Nānak's elder son, Sri Chand, who did not recognise the succession of Gurū Angad. See D. Ibbetson, *Panjab Castes*, p.228.

<sup>13</sup> In the plains of Naini Tal Dist., U.P.

<sup>14</sup> Sir Khad is the name of a tributary of the Sutlej joining it from the north; Sir Khad Hills must mean the mountains around its confluence with the Sutlej.

<sup>15</sup> Makhawal, where Gurū Tegh Bahādur established Chak Nānahī. Gurū Gobind Singh laid the foundations of Anandpur nearby. (J.S.G.)

<sup>16</sup> Literally, twelve-upon-ten, which would make the remission 120 per cent. of the land-tax. The correction can be made by reference to the report of this remission in the *Akbarnāma*, for which see the next note.

<sup>17</sup> While Akbar's meeting with Gurū Arjan (4 November 1598) is recorded by Abū'l Fazl in the *Akbarnāma*, Bib. Ind., Calcutta, 1873-87, III, p.746, the order for reduction of the *jāma* in the proportion of twelve-to-ten is given (III, p.747) as a subsequent measure, which merely cancelled the previous increase of the *jāma*. That increase, by a fifth ('ten to twelve'), had been made when the Court had moved earlier to Lahore. It is not mentioned in the *Akbarnāma* that Gurū Arjan had made any plea in this behalf.

<sup>18</sup> Dārā Shukoh had reached Lahore on 3 July 1658 and abandoned it in mid-August, making a hasty flight towards Multan. See K.R. Qānūngo, *Dārā Shukoh*, I, 2nd ed., Calcutta, 1952, pp.193-98.

<sup>19</sup> Ruler of the principality of Nūrpūr, in the north-western corner of the Kangra District, Himachal Pradesh.

## 6

# Documents on the Sikhs and Gurū Gobind Singh

From *Aḥkāṁ-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 1703-07

*Translated by Irfan Habib*

Some time after 1712, 'Ināyatullāh Khān "Isīmī" (d.1725), who had served as Emperor Aurangzeb's secretary, with the function of writing (or drafting) orders and letters to princes and nobles on behalf of the Emperor, collected a number of such documents in a well-known collection, *Aḥkāṁ-i 'Ālamgīrī*, "Orders of [Aurangzeb] 'Ālamgīr". Many of these are *ḥasbu'l ḥukms*, or orders issued upon instructions of the Emperor; others are letters written by 'Ināyatullāh Khān himself as is the case with Doc.II below. Wherever the documents in the *Aḥkāṁ-i 'Ālamgīrī* give current dates, or refer to current events, all these are found to belong to the last four or five years of his reign.

The four documents on the Sikhs and Gurū Gobind occur in I.O. MS 3387, ff.204a-b., 204b-205a, 243b and 245a-b. These have also been extracted from the Rizā Library Rampur MS by Ganda Singh and printed in his *Mākhaz-i Tawārīkh-i Sikhān*, Amritsar, 1949, I, pp.72-75. The names of addressees are not given in the MSS, but they can be identified from the nature of contents and cross-references within the documents themselves.

All the four documents are translated below. Of these Docs.III and IV relate to negotiations with Gurū Gobind Singh, which seem to have formed the context for Gurū Gobind Singh's Persian poem *Zafarnāma* addressed to Aurangzeb. Its text after careful verification

from MSS was printed by Ganda Singh, op.cit., pp.64-71. A full English translation (not entirely accurate and missing some nuances, but generally serviceable) was given in M.A. Macauliffe, *Sikh Religion*, V, pp.201-6, having been made from a text which could not have been very different from the one established by Ganda Singh.

## TRANSLATION

I

[To Wazir Khān]<sup>1</sup>

In this while, Muḥammad Auliyā, resident of the township of Būriya, in *pargana* Khizrābād, *sarkār* Sahrind [Sirhind], has reported through persons known to this just world-adorning Court that his Highness [the addressee] had, in accordance with imperial orders, and in concert with the *qāzī*, destroyed a temple [lit. 'image-house'] of the Nānak-devotees (*Nānak-parastān*) in the said township, and built a mosque, installing a dervish Saiyid Muẓaffar by name, for the offering of Muslim prayers in that mosque. The said people [i.e. 'the Nānak devotees'] raiding that mosque, killed the dervish; after investigation, they have admitted having killed him. But, owing to the representations made by some of them, who have come to this benevolent Court, the *qāzī* and *muḥtasib* of that place have been dismissed without any fault of theirs; and 'Alimullāh has been appointed *qāzī*, and his father, the *muḥtasib* [lit. given (the charge of) *iḥtisāb*]. The world-binding order has been issued that his Highness may be written to, as to why such negligence has occurred. Amends should be made in a commendable manner. "It belongs to Him, and is on God's account." It was also ordered that he should write the true facts about the previous *qāzī* and *muḥtasib*, and, till the receipt of his reply, the orders of appointment of the proposed *qāzī* and *muḥtasib* be not issued.

II

[To Wazir Khān]

His (the addressee's) letter has been received, containing news of the encampment of Gobind, the Nānak devotee, at twelve *kurohs* from Sahrind; of that Commander's despatch of seven hundred cavalry with a park of artillery; of that person's taking refuge in the house of the *zamīndār* of the village of Chamkaur; and of his two sons and other companions being killed,

and one son and his mother being captured; and other matters. Since His Excellency's petition, comprising an account of these matters, has already been seen by the Emperor, and His Highness Mirzā 'Alī Yār Beg has already conveyed the details to His Majesty, the contents of the letter [now received] have not been conveyed to His Majesty.

### III

[To Mun'im Khān]<sup>2</sup>

In these victory-laden times, the world-ruling order has been issued that His Ministerial Highness be written to, to the effect that Gobind, the chief (*ra'īs*) of Nānak devotees, has, along with a *vakīl* [representative], sent a petition to this sky-glorious Court, expressing a desire to present himself at this court (lit. to kiss the imperial threshold), and making a plea for the issuance of an order in his favour. His Majesty, in his benevolence, has elevated him by the issuance of such an obedience-requiring order, and a mace-bearer and Shaikh Muḥammad Yār, *maṣṣabdar*, have been designated to carry the said order, with instructions to convey it to His Highness [the addressee]. It is proper that His Highness, summon him to his own presence, after giving him assurances. After the receipt of the imperial order, he should arrange that a trustworthy person, possessed of tact and vigilance, should bring the said person [Gurū Gobind], together with the mace-bearer and the *maṣṣabdar*, to the Imperial Court. In this matter he is to recognise that strict obedience is being enjoined by the Imperial Court.

### IV

[To Wazīr Khān]

A world-ruling *ḥasbu'l ḥukm* [lit. 'According to (Imperial) Order'] is being sent to the effect that after the receipt of a petition from Gobind, chief of the Nānak-devotees, expressing a desire to present himself at the Court and making a plea for the issuance of an imperial order in his favour, which he had sent with a *vakīl*. His Majesty in his benevolence, elevated him with the grant of a *farmān*. Muḥammad Beg, the mace-bearer, and Shaikh Yār Muḥammad, *maṣṣabdar*, were designated to carry the *farmān* and take it to His Excellency the Minister, Muḥammad Mun'im Khān. An imperial order was issued to the said Khān, that he should give him [Gurū Gobind] assurances, and summon him to his presence, and, after receipt of the *farmān*, send a



trustworthy person to convey him to the imperial court, along with the mace-bearer and the *maṇṣabdār*. Whenever the said Gobind reaches the environs of Sahrind, His Highness [Wazir Khān] should provide him with an escort to let him pass through the limits of his own jurisdiction. Should he express some fears, either *in absentia* or on personal appearance, he should reassure him. Should he solicit expenses for the journey, he should be given money, in accordance with requirements, out of his effects that His Highness has seized from him.

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Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Wazir Khān was then the *faujdār* of Sirhind.
- <sup>2</sup> Mun'im Khān was then deputy-governor of *ṣūba* Lahorc, the post of governor being nominally held by Prince Mu'azzam, with headquarters at Kabul.

## 7

# The Martial Exploit and Tragic end of a “Son” of Gurū Gobind Singh, 1708

From ‘Abdu’r Rasūl, *Nairang-i Zamāna*

*Translated by Irfan Habib*

Along with Gurū Gobind Singh, who accompanied the Mughal emperor Bahādur Shāh’s camp, 1707-8, there was another man, a resident of Lahore, who too joined the camp, but only in search of employment. ‘Abdu’r Rasūl left Lahore on 15 December 1707 and making his way through Delhi and Ajmer, joined the Imperial camp when it was pitched some 12 *kurohs* (less than 30 miles) from Jodhpur, on 28 February 1708. Bahādur Shāh himself returned to Ajmer, and after “two or three months” began his march to the Deccan. Both the Gurū and ‘Abdu’r Rasūl went with him. It was in the vicinity of Chitor, where Bahādur Shāh pitched his camp on 13 April 1708 (Kāmgār Husainī, *Tazkiratu’s Salāṭīn Chaghātā*, ed. Muẓaffar Alam, Aligarh, 1980, p.26) that the incident described below occurred. Its exact date is not given by ‘Abdu’r Rasūl, though Bahādur Shāh stayed for some time near Chitor. But he dates an event that occurred at a much later stage of the march as happening on 5 May 1708. The author, reaching Burhānpur, stayed on there, while Bahādur Shāh (accompanied by the Gurū) marched onward (24 June) to prosecute his campaign against Prince Kām Bakhsh. In his Preface, ‘Abdu’r Rasūl says that his brother asked him at Burhānpur on 21 July 1708 to write an account of his journey, in compliance

with which request he produced this personal narrative, entitled the *Nairang-i Zamāna*. From a MS (possibly an autograph), Dr Muḥammad Baqir has edited the text, and published it from Lahore, 1960. This text is better and fuller than the text of this portion of the work, copied from a MS in Riḏā Library, Rampur, by Professor Ganda Singh and reproduced in his *Mākhaz-i Tawārīkh-i Sikhān*, pp.76-80. Muḥammad Baqir's ed. has, therefore, been used here.

It should be remembered that 'Abdu'r Rasūl wrote his account within three or four months of the incident, at a time when Gurū Gobind Singh was still alive (he died at Nander on 7 October 1708). The Sikh tradition too records an incident at Chitor, where the *Gurū*'s followers had a quarrel with the Rājput̃s over grass for their horses (Macauliffe, *Sikh Religion*, V, p.235). Since the *fracas* at the Chitor fort appears also to have taken place with the Rājput̃ soldiers of the garrison, the incident is likely to be the same one. That 'Abdu-r Rasūl or his reporters misidentified a young officer in the *Gurū*'s retinue as a son of his is quite possible. (But it may be noticed that Chaturman, in *Chahār Gulshan* (see our Text 15), says a son of Gurū Gobind Singh had died in Ajmer; and Chitor belonged to *ṣūba* Ajmer.) The writer's general sense of admiration and sympathy for the Sikh party may be noted.

'Abdu'r Rasūl attempts a complex style of composition, with words and phrases carrying double meanings, intricate allusions and obscure suggestions. A literal translation could not, in such circumstances, be attempted, and what is offered is a rendering that aims to contain all the substantive information. Even so, the reader may feel that there is still too much superfluous matter here.

### TRANSLATION

*Nairang-i Zamāna*, printed ed., pp.35-40.

[The Imperial Camp was pitched in the vicinity of the fort of Chitor for some time, when Bahādur Shāh was on his way to the Deccan from Ajmer. The Emperor stayed here waiting for the son of the Rāna of Udaipūr to appear with presents.]

One of these days, the son of *Gurū* Gobind, who is one of the renowned successors of Bābā Nānak, urged by his young

age and the decree of fate, was seized by the desire to visit the fort [of Chitor]. He rode out, brilliant on a bray horse, and took along with him some friends of the same age, attached to him by ties of affection, and all in the prime of youth, to see the flower-gardens and the lofty buildings [of the fort]. When he had traversed the long and winding path and approached the fateful river<sup>1</sup> [in front of the fort], the guardians of the stone-faced fort-wall and guards of the deathly gate, seeking to oppress such a handsome, slim man of captivating appearance, spoke out, forbidding him from entering the fort and barred him from fulfilling his wish. They said that from the time of the conquest of this great fortress by the sword of the victorious armies of Islām, during the reign of 'Arsh Āshyānī<sup>2</sup> Jalāluddīn Muḥammad Akbar Pādshāh Ghāzī, it has been firmly decreed and established that no Hindu or Muslim can come into this strong fort. And if perchance any person, whether deliberately or in ignorance, crosses the foot of the gate and does not listen to warning, his head must be severed from the body by the sharp sword so as to send him to his doom.... [couplet omitted].

That dashing horseman and brave spear-wielder held it against his soldierly dignity to accept these admonitions and to turn back from that place. He bowed to the decree of fate and preferred the field of battle to any turning back. First, the sun rose and illumined flower-beds and gardens and so he [this youth] drank from a cup filled with wine and success fulfilling all desire ... [Verses omitted, except the last couplet]

But be warned of the autumn wind,

Which turns to dust the garden's spring.

The time came for the sunset, and the black dregs of night sprang forth pitch-like from the wine-store of the universe.

That model [lit. essence] of bravery, along with his companions, determined upon opening the gate of that fort, and he assigned different tasks to his companions. He ordered his force to move like a flood, reminded them of the call of bravery and instructed them how to take life. Every one of them moved like an arrow to perform his task. On the other side, the officers of the gate prepared for battle and strife, and [couplet] —

Right and left of that fort

They closed with steel any opening, even for vapour.

When he [*Gurū* Gobind's son] reached the site of battle, the battle was joined from both sides, and much bravery was displayed. Arrows flew, bows were bent, and spears were raised.

The muskets searched for their targets among the foes' breasts. The lasso was thrown; the wooden frame imprisoned the enemy. The coat of mail blunted the arrow, the shield foiled the foe. The field was reddened by the blood of heroes... [Verses omitted].

After some time the enemy [the guards of the fort] began to weaken, so that the strong-armed ones suffered a great defeat from those frail of body.<sup>3</sup> But in the meantime another force [of the garrison] came out of an ambushade, and launched heroic assaults. From the great mass of the spears (*barchha*) of the Rājput̃s and daggers (*kaṭāra*) of the Hindus,<sup>4</sup> many swords fell into heaps. From both sides, sharp sword blades cut down necks, and from hidden places bowmen rained arrows... [Couplets omitted].

The men [of the fort] by their heroic deeds, outdid the heroes of Iran and commanders of Arabia, and by their greater strength of arms and experience prevailed over the weaker, frail warriors, who numbered more than fifty and less than sixty. That is, surrounding all of them, they mercilessly cut them down with stone hits, musket shots and arrows. The son of Gurū Gobind, like a fierce tiger, with a sword that cut through the armour, sent many persons to death to join his own companions, and then he too, falling, lay dead by their side.

Couplet:

With a diamond-like sword of Darghān steel,  
He slew many, but was, alas, himself slain.<sup>5</sup>

[The account of the incident closes here. The author goes on to say that despite much time spent in waiting for the son of the Rāna,<sup>6</sup> that "dirty one" did not put in an appearance, and so the camp moved on.]

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Presumably, Berach R.

<sup>2</sup> Akbar's posthumous title, correctly 'Arsh Āstāni.

<sup>3</sup> *Zu'f-i buniya*. But, since *buniya* can also be read *banya*, does the author intend a double meaning here, equating the commercial *Khatri* caste (to which the Gurū's family belonged) with the *Banya* caste?

<sup>4</sup> This makes it clear that the fort was mainly guarded by Rājput̃s and other Hindu soldiers. This matches the Sikh tradition of a quarrel between the Sikhs and Rājput̃s at Chitor on this occasion (Macauliffe, V, p.235).

<sup>5</sup> This couplet is apparently from Firdausi's *Shāhnāma*, Darghān, at which the steel of the sword is said to have been made, was a well-known town of *Khawārizm* (Le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, Cambridge, 1930, 451-2).

<sup>6</sup> Not "Rāta", as printed.

## 8

### Gurū Gobind Singh

Notice by Bhīmsen, 1708

*Translated by Irfan Habib*

Bhīmsen's *Nuskha-i Dilkushā*, is a history of Aurangzeb's reign, written largely in the form of memoirs. An officer of Dalpat Rāo Bundela, who perished at the battle of Jajau, June 1707, Bhīmsen not only gives an account of that battle, at which he was present, but also the proceedings thereafter of the victorious Bahādur Shāh. It is in connection with these that the following notice of the Sikhs and Gurū Gobind Singh occurs. It is obvious that Bhīmsen wrote of the Gurū when he was still alive. Bhīmsen himself gives a very short account of what happened in the Deccan, as he rapidly mentions Kām Bakhsh's death in January 1709, and then, with some words about his own retirement from service, closes his work.

The following translation is made from British Library MS, Or. 23, ff. 168b-169a. The text has not been printed, and the translation by Jadunath Sarkār, ed. V.G. Khobrekar, Bombay, 1972, closes with Aurangzeb's death, and, therefore, does not include the last portion of Bhīmsen's work where the notice, here translated, occurs.

#### TRANSLATION

ff. 168b-169a

*Gor* [Gurū] Gobind is one of the descendants [*sic!* successors] of the famous Gurū Nānak, who, in the time of the rule of the Afghans, used to live by the profession of service (*naukarī*), and befriended religious men (*fuqarā*), greatly honouring them. Since fortune aided him, he reached such a [spiritual]

condition himself that many people of Multan and Lahore and that territory, began to follow him, becoming his disciples. Nānak wrote books in the praise and assertion of the unity of God. Gradually it happened that in every country he appointed deputies, so that they might guide people to his religion. Now it has been seen and heard that no country, city, township and village is without people believing in him. From every place, offerings of large sums of money reach his descendants, who are his successors; they spend their life in much splendour. Some of his descendants have been masters of mystic attainments and have adopted the way of poverty and humility. Many took to the path of rebellion, such as Tegh Bahādur, by name, who lived in the mountains near Sirhind: he got himself called King (Pādshāh), and a large body of people gathered around him. When the news was conveyed to His Majesty Emperor 'Ālamgīr [Aurangzeb], it was ordered that he should be brought to the Court. When he came to the Court, he was executed. When His Majesty Emperor Bahādur Shāh, after his victory [over Prince A'ẓam] occupied the throne at Akbarābād [Agra], he [Gurū Gobind] obtained the good fortune of presenting himself before him. [This writer] heard that he does not follow the ways of religious men and devishes, but is proud of his soldierly profession (*sipahgarī*).

## 9

# Gurū Gobind Singh and the Sikhs of the *Khālṣa*

Reports from Bahādur Shāh's Court, 1707-10

*Translated by Irfan Habib*

Every important noble had a *vakīl* or agent at the Imperial Court. He was expected to send to his principal a daily report of what transpired at the Imperial Court, where these agents were allowed access. Such reports were called *akhbārāt-i darbār-i mu'allā*. They are not official records of what transpired, but record only what the *vakīl* heard, or thought he heard. Part I below consists of extracts from such *akhbārāt* sent by the *vakīl* of Sawai Jai Singh, the Amber ruler, and now preserved at the Rajasthan State Archives. The two reports under Part II below are not *akhbārāt* but reports on the Sikhs from his *vakīl* at the Imperial court to Sawāi Jai Singh. These extracts were made from the original papers by Professor Ganda Singh and are printed in his *Mākhaz-i Tawārīkh-i Sikhān*, I, pp.82-85.

The spelling *Gorū* is transliterated as *Gurū* throughout.

## TRANSLATION

### I

*5 Jumāda I, R.Y. 1 [4 August 1707]*

Gobind the Nānakī came armed, in accordance with orders, and presented himself, making an offering of 100 *ashrafīs* [gold coins]. A robe of honour and *padak* [medallion], set with precious stones, was given to him, and he was permitted to leave.

*24 Sha'bān, R.Y. 2 [8 November 1708]*

It was reported that Gurū Gobind Rāi has slain Jamshed



Khān Afghan.<sup>1</sup> A mourning robe was given to the son of the said Khān.

*26 Sha'bān, R.Y.2 [10 November 1708]*

It was ordered that the son of Gurū Gobind Rāi Nānakpanthi be given a mourning robe on account of his father's death.

*9 Ramazān, R.Y. 2 [22 November 1708]*

It was reported that the deceased Gurū Gobind Singh has left behind much property. Orders are sought about sequestering them.

It was observed [by the Emperor]: "The kings' treasury does not get affluent by seizing such property. Let them not interfere with the property of devishes."

## II

*25 Rabī' I, R.Y. 4 [24 May 1710]*

It was desired that a written report about the Sikhs of the Khālṣa be furnished. The facts are that Tiyaṅ Mal,<sup>1</sup> the successor of Gurū Nānak was in the suit of the heaven-resident Mahārāja Rām Singh Jīū in Assam; and after him Gurū Gobind Singh became his successor. He exercised dominance and authority in the sub-montane tract of Kahlūr Hills. When his friendship with the mountain *rājas* was disrupted, imperial forces from Lahore, Jammu and Sahrind and all the *rājas* came and besieged him. After much battle and contention, he came out of that territory; and his children were killed. On account of certain matters, the late Emperor Aurangzeb summoned him to the Court. Accordingly, he wanted to make his way to the Court; but it happened that the war of royal succession (*bādshāh-gardī*) intervened. Now he reached the Court through the mediation of Jumdatu'l Mulk [Mun'im Khān], and the Emperor [Bahādur Shāh] gave him his attention. Finally, he lost his life from a dagger thrust at the hands of an Afghan; that Afghan too was killed in the course of that quarrel. But(!) the Sikhs used to become Sikhs through the mediation of *masands*, and went on making offerings, etc. Gurū Gobind Singh dismissed the *masands* by one stroke of pen and established the Khālṣa. It was settled by him that the Sikhs of the Khālṣa would not cut the hair of the head, moustaches and beard and would be known as Sikhs of the Khālṣa. Among the community of Khatris, a great disturbance occurred, and marriages and kinships [between the Khālṣa Sikhs and others] were given up. First, at the village Chak, in *pargana* Paṭṭī, which

is known as Chak Gurū, it came to a fight. The Sikhs of the *Khālṣa* came out victorious. The force that had been sent from Lahore failed to control matters. Thereafter that group [of *Khālṣa* Sikhs] dispersed towards Jalandhar and began to engage in pillage and plunder. During these disturbances Wazīr *Khān* sent his troops, but the commanders of these troops got killed. They have a heart-felt enmity towards Wazīr *Khān*, who had killed the young sons of Gurū Gobind Singh. As a result, disorder has spread in all the territories under Wazīr *Khān*. He himself stays at Sahrind, relying on the force of money and men. Now the factious *zamīndārs* have obtained the opportunity of raising a rebellion and obtaining plunder. They plunder *parganas* and take the name of Sikhs of the *Khālṣa*. They say that Gurū Gobind Singh has himself come and joined these people; and some times they say a Saiyid has appeared from nowhere, and that is why this sect has obtained so much power. Ajit Singh, the elder son of Gobind Singh, who had been killed in previous encounters, has come back to the capital [Delhi], and is camping in Jaisinghpura and Ahkala. Many believe in him, and do not quarrel.

[Undated/Date lost?]

Previously a detailed report was sent regarding the facts about the Sikhs of the *Khālṣa* and the coming of Gurū Gobind Singh [Banda Bahādur]. This must have been conveyed to His Highness. Until this time, Wazīr *Khān* was an obstacle in the path of this sect. Now, from the letters of the *sāhūkārs*, it transpires that near the *pargana* [of Sahrind] on Saturday 25 Rabī' I [24 May 1710], on *akādasī* day, a battle with Wazīr *Khān* took place. Contention and slaughter continued till the third quarter of the day. Thereafter Wazīr *Khān* died from injuries suffered from arrows and musket shots. His son and son-in-law were also slain, or, according to some, were taken prisoner alive. Many of the companions of Wazīr *Khān* were either killed or wounded. The Sikhs of the *Khālṣa* have established their authority in Sahrind and have decreed that no one should kill any animal.

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> This gives us the authentic name of the assassin, who died at the hands of the Gurū after he had fatally injured him. The name found in Sikh tradition is "Gul *Khān*" (Macauliffe, *Sikh Religion*, V, p.241). There seems, moreover, a month's difference between the date of death of Gurū Gobind Singh indicated by this report and the one given in Sikh tradition, viz. 7 October 1708.

*Akhbarat on Guru Gobind*

<sup>2</sup> Gurū Tegh Bahādur. Cf Macauliffe, IV, pp.348-60.

<sup>3</sup> Properly *ekādasī*, eleventh day of each half of the lunar month; so 25 Rabi' would be *ekādasī* of the second half.

# 10

## Gurū Nānak, Gurū Gobind Singh, and the Revolt under Banda Bahādur 1709-10 & 1713-16

From Muhammad Qāsim “‘Ibrat”, *Ibratnāma*

*Translated by Irfan Habib*

Muḥammad Qāsim was a native of Lahore, who pursued there a career as a government accountant until 1718, when he left for Delhi, to take employment there. In 1723 he wrote the *Ibratnāma* mainly based on what he himself saw and heard. Thus, when the revolt under Banda Bahādur took place, 1709-16, he was in Lahore, and his information is especially detailed on what took place in its vicinity. He begins his account with a long passage in praise of Gurū Nānak, and his animosity seems to be confined to Banda Bahādur and his followers.

The work exists in several MSS and has been printed, ed. Zahuruddin Ahmad, Lahore, 1977. This is fairly well edited; but there are misprints, and it has therefore been compared carefully with the MS of the work in the British Library, London, Add.26,245. The author attempts a complicated style, with unfamiliar idiom, and this has obviously led the scribes to make many mistakes in transcription. Like other Persian narrators, he never uses the name “Banda”, except in a heading, which too is possibly supplied by the editor himself (placed within inverted commas on p.180 of the printed edition), since it does not occur in MS Add.26,245 (which is henceforth referred to as “the MS”). Banda is generally styled *Gorū*, a form of spelling adopted for *Gurū* in Persian (and later,

## *Banda Bahadur's Rebellion*

Urdu) writing to avoid it being pronounced as *Garū*; this is in our translation uniformly restored to *Gurū*.

This text is weak in chronology, which is best supplied by the *Tazkiratu's Salāṭīn Chaghātā*, extracts from which are translated separately (our Text 12).

The Appendix gives a report on the entry of Banda Bahādur into Delhi and the execution there of his companions, taken from a letter sent by the English mission under Surman, then at the Mughal court.

### TRANSLATION

#### I

Muḥammad Qāsim, *'Ibratnāma*,  
printed text, pp.133-146; British Library MS  
Add.26,245, ff.26 b-35b.

#### ... The Appearance of the Evil Gurū<sup>1</sup>

... In this while [that Bahādur Shāh was away in the south], as a magical happening of the Divine-ordained fate, a wonderful calamity occurred in the country of the Punjāb, and a strange event raised its head out of the secret folds of time. That is, the report of the martyrdom of the late Wazīr *Khān*, *faujdār* of Sirhind, the sacking of [many] *parganas* by the deceptions and contrivances of the doomed\* *Gurū* [Banda]\*, the exiling of persons of status and the occurrence of strange astonishing things that defy imagination, was received at the Imperial Court.

#### Occurrence of the Rebellion of the Sikhs<sup>2</sup>

To give the main particulars: In old times in a particular year, there was a dervish by the name of Nānak, clothed in Reality, rooted in Knowledge, endowed with spiritual perfections, rising above physical repute and name. He regarded following the constraints of the threads of Infidelity as absolute Infidelity, and held [full] obedience to the faith of Islām as Islām.<sup>3</sup> On the one hand, he conversed on the secret [virtues] of fast and prayer with [Muslim] mystics, scholars and learned men, and, on the other, went in step with the Veda-reading, Reality-comprehending<sup>4</sup> Brahmins. In the midst of [the prevailing] Duality he maintained uniformity in his relations with all people; and amidst the mass of contradictory elements, he was in every way free from [matters of] peace-and-strife. Sometime he would engage in building an idol temple (*deora*) of the Hindus and [at other times] devote

himself to laying the foundations of a mosque, in accordance with the law of Islām. Some time he would circumambulate the House of God [*Ka'ba*] in accordance with the customs of the mystical and spiritual people; and some times, he would go to visit the tower of Jagannāth<sup>5</sup> and Kāshī. He had travelled to all the four quarters of the world, and owing to his travels and journeys, his entire legs up to the knees were worn down. In every land there was an uproar over his words, and in every country there was tumult from his Reality-surveying compositions. He had been in the company of God-knowing saints and obtained favours from the assemblies of masters of spiritual truths. For a while he conversed with His Holiness Shaikh Farīd Shakar-ganj, obtaining thereby a treasure of sweetness,<sup>6</sup> and from attending for a time on His Holiness Shāh 'Abdu'r Raḥmān Bakhtyār he drew vernal favours.<sup>7</sup> He put his body under severe austerities. This great man of the visible world and the beautiful one of the spiritual, following the custom of the people, left behind his natural offspring in this temporal world. But his own eye favoured more the group of seekers and disciples, one of whom was Angat [Angad] Khatri. As he was favoured by his [Nānak's] knowledge-laden eyes, he became cognizant of spiritual truths and the foundations of the commonwealth of faith. Some generations after him, Har Rāi came into the world [and became his successor]. Group upon group of people bent their necks to follow and obey him, and glorified him through a thousand ways of giving him respect and honour. After him Gurū Tegh Bahādur, his son(!), rose further in status in comparison with his father. He spent much time in sport and game, but because of the effect of the attention and pleasing ways of acceptance of that accepted one, the inclinations of the people and the flow of worldly things [towards him], such as petty items and valuables, money and goods, elephants and horses, did not decrease, so that instead of himself [doing so], his followers from time to time claimed sovereignty for him. A long time he spent in this way in the mountainous country in the proximity of Sahrind [Sirhind] and Bajwāra. At last, the seat of sovereignty received lustre by being occupied by His Majesty Muḥammad Aurangzeb 'Ālamgīr, who, owing to his own passionate nature and regard for royal power, did not like such meaningless tumult. In the beginning of his reign he secluded himself in the company of many recluses, and held discussions on spiritual and mystic truths with this set of men, free of all [worldly] constraints. Some, like His Holiness Shāh Daulā of Gujarat [Punjab], Shāh Ṣadrūddin of Qasur, and

His Holiness Shāh Ḥasan Durr, who has his elevated seat [shrine] near Shāh Dara on the opposite bank of the Rāwī, at Lahore, sat [in the Emperor's company], of their own accord, possessing hearts that are free from cares.<sup>8</sup> Others, like Sarmad, the mendicant (*qalandar*), entrusted their lives to Fate and tasted martyrdom from the sharp sword.<sup>9</sup> To this latter group belonged Gurū Tegh Bahādur, who obtained the honour of saluting [His Majesty] upon being summoned to the Court. Owing to what has been written above, he came under [the Emperor's] wrath and saw himself condemned to death.

He [*Gurū Tegh Bahādur*] had a son called *Gurū Gobind*. After his father's death, the crown of chiefship was put on his head. More people came to serve him than his father or grandfather. This young man, in comparison with his precursors, had more abundant resources for comfort and material for entertainment. The magnificence of his state grew to such extent that he was not behind the nobles of 5,000 [*zāt*] or even rulers of principalities in anything concerned with greatness of splendour or accumulation of resources. Thus in this way he spent his time in the mountainous country in the proximity of *chakla* Sahrind in luxury and pleasure, joy and delight. After some time, the inclination to serve him on the part of all kinds of people exceeded every limit and there was no month or year when the roads were not filled by caravans of people carrying offerings to him. In the meanwhile, some *zamīndārs* adopted the discipleship sold to them by him, and, by reason of the large number of retainers and abundant resources, and upon incitement and spells from him, became contumacious in the matter of paying the money [in tax or tribute] due to the Emperor, and began to establish unprecedented innovations in cities and villages. Although no one received any injury, yet the Imperial officials submitted to the Imperial Court reports of his growing splendour and prosperity (lit. perfection) and of [the large number of] people coming to serve him. Honoured orders were issued from the Imperial Court to Wazīr *Khān*,<sup>10</sup> *faujdar* [commandant] of *chakla* Sahrind, that if *Gurū Gobind* lives like other recluses, and his own ancestors, and shuns and avoids [unsuitable] words such as his followers used by giving him the title of king (*pādshāh*), as well as the imitating of the ways and practices of sovereigns, such as showing one's face in the *jharoka*<sup>11</sup> and receiving the *sijda*<sup>12</sup> from the people, this would be better. But if he insists on actions that are against the regulations and does not shun them or act on this reprimand, then he [Wazīr *Khān*] should exert himself to the

utmost to devastate the places [under his control] and expel him from those territories of his. In accordance with the binding instructions of [His Majesty,] the Spiritual Guide, and the information given to him by some self-serving persons, he [Wazir Khān] sent to him harsh messages and such orders as are sent to ordinary persons, [to the effect] that like other *zamīndārs* he should pay the land revenue on most of his hereditary lands (*altamghāt*) reserved for the expenses of his mendicants. These turning out to be disagreeable to that unfortunate man, intoxicated with the wine of sovereignty, he struck out his harsh tongue like a sword, until from both sides the matter led to battle and war. After much contention and slaughter, Wazir Khān's troops, owing to their having Imperial glory at their back, obtained success. Two infant sons of Gurū Gobind and some women [of his] were captured by this army. He himself fled into mountainous country, hard of access. In accordance with firm orders, these prisoners were kept in the fort of Sahrind, without any of the necessities being denied to them. They passed their days, each darkened by misfortune till the night came and waited for the dawn of their glory.<sup>13</sup> After this occurrence thousands upon thousands of people, who by their forehead mark were so much bound to his service, came to harbour in their hearts seeds of enmity against Wazir Khān, and even against the Muslims, though they could not do anything out of helplessness [at that moment]. At the same time, Gurū Gobind, from grief at separation from his beloved sons and other [members of] his family and relations, withdrew his hand from enjoying<sup>14</sup> his means of living and luxury in diet and clothing and abstained from cutting the hair of his head and dressing his beard and moustaches; he [thus] spent his days in mourning. The sacred thread was also given up for the chain of iron. His followers, believing the imitation of his ways to be a form of worship, postponed the taking of any degree of enjoyment of life until revenge was taken from the Muslims. Some belonging to this sect [lit. garb], owing to their connections with, or their living among, the Muslims or their being in service of the men of true faith [Muslims], did not agree to having their hair of the head, beard and moustaches grow in a way as left no distinction whatsoever between man and beast. They confined themselves to the beliefs they had in His Holiness Nānak Shāh Dervish. Those who followed his [Gurū Gobind Singh's] ways, and denied themselves any enjoyment of life, were called *Khālṣa*; and the others came to be popularly called *chākar* (servants). Many low-class people took



to this unique mode for securing larger means of livelihood.

After some time, when the throne of sovereignty was exalted to the status of a heavenly seat by the accession [in A.D. 1707] of His Majesty Muḥammad Mu'azzam Bahādur Shāh, the adoption of mercy and diffusion of benevolence by this great man of the temporal and spiritual world [i.e. the new Emperor] emboldened every one to pursue his ambitions.<sup>14</sup> At the time that he proceeded to the Deccan to make war on [his younger brother] Kām Bakhsh,<sup>14a</sup> Gurū Gobind too, along with his tribe and troops, accompanied the Imperial Camp in the march, [in the expectation] that by performance of service he might receive imperial favour, and the thorn of cruelty that had been struck into his breast by Wazīr Khān's men be removed. It seems that some Afghan horse traders also accompanied him, in order to recover the price of some horses they claimed to be due from him. They began to quarrel over this among themselves and one of those inconsiderate persons struck him fatally with a dagger (*jamdhar*). He [the assailant] wanted to run out swiftly, but the *Gurū*, getting the opportunity of revenge, struck him with a knife, and the others of his group finished him off. The *Gurū*'s followers assembled from all sides, and, proceeding with their own prescribed ritual, cremated his body with due ceremony, with sandal and aloe-wood. From that time a fresh cause of mourning arose for that community (*qaum*).

Many of those people moved about with filthy mounts and melancholy hearts in [various] places and gave themselves up to unrealistic plans, which could not be put into effect because of their shortage of resources and lack of expertise, until the material for tumult gathered together [in sufficient strength] within the world's inner frame, and drew close to an outbreak. So, raising to chiefship a manikin of unknown ancestry, whose body and features [lit elements, matter] enabled him to assume various appearances, a person like one who in the Hindwi language is called a *bahrūpiya*, they raised a noise in the mountainous country, that the slain *Gurū* had appeared in another form<sup>15</sup> to take revenge for the humiliations inflicted on him. The faithless, disloyal ones obtained an opportunity to raise a tumult. Troop after troop of such persons as would hurt their mothers and disgust their fathers, who were in want for their daily sustenance, appeared before him, and came to possess clothes and horses. In a short while, a large body gathered [around him]. He sent messages demanding submission from the peasants of many villages belonging to

Sahrind, and sat awaiting their allegiance. He also laid his hands on the goods of travellers and those going to and fro. When the news reached His Highness Wazir Khān, *Faujdār* of *chakla* Sahrind, he rode out with the troops he had with him, to punish this evil rebel force. A great battle occurred twelve *kurohs* from Sahrind. The young men of the army of Islām, showing exemplary bravery, tasted martyrdom, after obtaining repute in the field of valour. Especially was heroism displayed in this battle by Sher Muḥammad and Khawāja 'Alī, Afghans of Kotla Maler,<sup>16</sup> who in this *sarkār* were masters of a host<sup>17</sup> and commanded trust. After much fighting, they stood firm like the Pole Star within that very circle and surrendered their lives to the Creator. You may say, they attained goodness and good name in that field of valour. When the chiefs of the army, by the will of God, were sent to their deaths, Wazir Khān, despite his old age, weakness of hand and foot, and the decline of the strength of the body, strove to shoot arrows and encourage his companions. But once the boat of hope is destroyed by an accident, it cannot thereafter be set to sail by the strength of the arm of any of the professional captains of the world of strategem. At last, the wicked Infidels extended their victorious hand for the plunder of the [Mughal] army and [the seizure] of the commander's elephant. Treating the corpse of that martyred Saiyid [Wazir Khān] with every visible indignity they could devise, they had it suspended from a tree.

With such malevolence they marched on the city [of Sahrind]. When the news of this calamity reached the city, all alertness and action deserted the luckless officials and the helpless citizens (*ri'āyā*). Wazir Khān's own eldest son did not bother about [his father's] treasure and hoard, but, taking the young and old of his household with him, took the road to Shāhjahānābād [Delhi]. Everyone who, within that short time, abandoned goods and property, and took to exile, with every humiliation and dishonour, at least saved his own life. Any one who got involved in thoughts of gathering his goods, or searching for mounts [or carriagés], or [other] various designs, fell prisoners to the cruel hands of those wicked Infidels. Troop after troop of unfeeling sweepers surrounded the city, in the manner of a thorn-bush enclosing a flower garden, and laid their insolent hands on people's possessions and proceeded to dishonour both the small and the big.

They specially plundered the goods and houses of Suchadānand,<sup>18</sup> Chief Clerk (*Peshkāṛ*) of the late Wazir Khān. You

may say, he had gathered and set up these for this day, so that the flower-garden may become the ground for the growth of thorn-bushes and Paradise turn into the nursing ground of the vile crow! Praise be to God, in the court of the Divine Avenger, a helpless ant can be the cause of the death of the man-killing snake, and an impotent and powerless gnat can bring about the destruction of a bloodthirsty elephant! What has been heard from trustworthy persons of that area is that this unjust, noxious raw man<sup>19</sup> in the time of government of the martyred Wazir *Khān* had withheld no cruelties from being inflicted on the poor and had laid every seed of tumult for his own advantage; so he reaped the fruit of it all. Otherwise, persons who were guarded by God's protection, scorned their own large treasures and fled with their honour intact. Some, by changing their clothing, remained concealed in that city and stayed safe from the oppressive hand of that tyrannical crew. The harm that came to persons and places and honour and dignity, without precedent, a feeling of sadness and civility does not permit one to record;<sup>20</sup> it is well known to contemporaries and eye-witnesses. In short, that flood, which overthrew the foundations of the honour of a whole world, left nothing undone in destroying that city and the inhabited places of that neighbourhood. So far as possible, they did not let any one else retain arms, horses, other goods and chattel of chiefship. They called upon most people to adopt their own disreputable faith; some willingly, and others under compulsion, obeyed. A Jatt called Bāz Singh,<sup>21</sup> one of the wretches from *pargana* Haibatpūr, belonging to the *ṣūba* of the Panjāb, had the accursed turban-tail of pseudo-chiefship tied on his head to assume the *ṣūbadārī* of Sahrind, appoint officers over the *parganas*, and carry out destructive activities. He waited for the coming of warriors from the void. Every day such cruelty-inspired troops reached the surrounding *parganas* of Sāmāna, Sunām, Kaithal and Gurām in order to stamp the picture of their unmanliness upon the helpless ones. The gentry of Sāmāna fought with valour and gallantry and nearly five thousand persons, from amongst Saiyids, Mughals, Rājputs and Marals<sup>22</sup> drank from the cup of martyrdom. A similar number of women of honour, by either drinking the bitter liquid of poison or by use of sword and dagger [to kill themselves], displayed the essence (*jauhar*) of their gentle birth and honour. All territory from the Sutlej river, which is popularly called the Ludhiāna River, up to Karnāl, passed under the government and control of that lying Infidel [Banda Bahādur].

That base person established himself in the protection

of the fort of Muḫliṣpūr near Sādhaura, forty *kurohs* from Sahrind, which is in lowlying (*dābar*) land and the appointed hunting ground of Kings.<sup>23</sup> He appointed other manikins in those territories to carry out shameful cruelties such as destroying prosperous places, and breaking and damaging mosques and tombs of men of God.

From the diffusion of this news, the seditious persons of the country of the Panjāb [were encouraged to rise]. In the village of Chak Gurū, which is at a distance of twenty *kurohs* from Lahore, and is a pleasant and charming place, containing gardens full of trees, with sweet fruits, and a big tank, built in the time of Gobind Singh,<sup>24</sup> a disciple of Nānak Shāh Dervish, and known as Amritsar, lakh upon lakh of these people collect on the Baisākhi day, which is the same as the first of Farwardi [21 March]. There, amidst various kinds of spectacles with illuminations, they engage themselves in dance, sport and bathing. A great multitude of these Singhs,<sup>25</sup> gathering there went on a rampage against the people (*ri'āyā*) of the environs and neighbourhood the same way as at Sahrind. At that time the office of the *ṣūbadārī* (Provincial Governorship) was vested in the late Saiyid Aslam Khān, belonging to a family of theologians (*maulawī-zādas*) of Kābul. This sagacious man, immersed in impractical thoughts, did not dare to step forward to join battle and contention. He desired that he might manage the affair through politic means. For a time, whatever happened [outside], there was no disturbance in Lahore owing to his good management. But such important *parganas* as Batāla and Kalānaur, which was the [first] seat of King Muḫammad Akbar Jalāluddīn,<sup>26</sup> and which owing to its fine goods, products and heavenly gardens is the envy of Kābul and Kashmir, were burnt to black ash by the tumult raised by this cruel sect. From the lack of courage of the Governor of the Province, the ill-omened steps of these dreaded men darkened [everything] up to the limits of the city. They now created disturbance for the comfort-enjoying citizens of the heavenly city of Lahore, and brought about calamitous conditions by their mischief and noise.

When no action was taken in this regard by the Governor and other commanders of troops to destroy this dissolution-deserving sect, the learned men, mystics, poor [scholars] and pious men of the country of the Punjab, inspired by the care for the pure [Muslim] community and a feeling for the honour for the luminous [Muslim] law, without any help from the men of authority and aid from possessors of rank, with all lack of resources and helplessness and powerlessness, yet keeping their sight on God's benevolence,

girded their loins to engage in manly conduct. Thereafter, many men of gentle and noble birth belonging to the city and villages, from amongst the Shaikhs, Saiyids, Afghāns and Mughals were similarly aroused by their sense of honour.

Regarding their joining this spiritual army as an auspicious deed and a means of worship, they joined [the Muslim scholars] in [the journey on] this road of difficulty and path of adversity. One of these was Muḥammad Naqī by name, one of those attached to the late Shāh Sa'dullāh; [another was] Mūsā, a young man, the son of Khudāvardi Beg Aghar Khān. Despite limited means, they endeavoured valiantly to gather together arms and men by selling away their inherited property and articles of necessity, and joined with pure minds and sincere hearts. Some of the Parāchas<sup>27</sup> of the trading profession, who in the Punjab are known as Lakhīs, ['possessed of lakhs'] obtained merit by giving assistance through meeting the expenses on food and drink. Some famous divines such as Hājī Saiyid Ismā'il, Hājī Yār Beg, Shāh 'Ināyat, Mullā Pīr Muḥammad Wā'iz (sermon-giver), personally joined in the Holy War, despite weakness of body and lack of experience in dealing with tumult and disturbance. The rallying point of this godly army was fixed near the 'Īdgah Mosque, which had a courtyard larger than the area of [the town of] Amul.<sup>28</sup> When the Provincial Governor, Aslam Khān discovered that he had become notorious among people for lack of courage, he had no option but to send Mīr 'Aṭṭullāh, a notable from Pūrab [East], and Muḥammad Khān Kadal [Kharal],<sup>29</sup> a zamīndār of Faridābād, with five hundred horse and foot, to join them.

Those Sikhs,\* upon hearing this news, collected from all directions, and in *pargana* Tappa Pharli, where Bhagwant Rāi Mehta, *Qāningo* of that place, had built a fort, took refuge there and busied themselves in setting up watch towers and preparing materials, till this divine army, after two halts, arrived to confront those Infidels, and made things difficult for them. Despite all their boldness and fearlessness, they [the Sikhs] could not break out of that encirclement. They did not show any laxity in shooting arrows and firing from muskets, whatever they had in their hands, from the tower and openings (*bāra*). Some of this army, owing to inexperience, rushed to the foot of the fort wall and manfully tasted the cup of martyrdom there. But the sight of the large mass of men and God's punishment so worked on their fear-struck hearts, that one day-and-night, those unprotected manikins, being no longer able to fight, took to flight taking advantage of the dark

curtain of the night, which was blacker than their evil fate. The Army of Islām entered Lahore, victorious and triumphant, happy and pleased. Since of this body, some were of a vile and ungentlemanly disposition, whose hereditary meanness had not been removed by the nobility conferred by learning, being intoxicated by pride and conceit, out of false pretensions, they committed shameful acts upon the Hindus of the city and heaped humiliation upon the city officers.

Since in the Divine court of justice, “every act has a recompense, and every doer gets his deserts” (hemistich), when the next time the lost tribe [the Sikhs] gathered *en masse* at Kotla Begam, twenty-and-odd *kurohs* from Lahore, near the township of Chamārhi [Chamiārī], and indulged in their evil practices, these gentlemen [of Lahore], in order to protect their honour, did not occupy themselves in securing the respect due to their rank on account of learning and literature,<sup>30</sup> [but] again girded their loins to join the body of ordinary people and came out [of the City] with an army that was more numerous than ants and locusts. While they were coming out, there was also some plundering of the peasants (*ri’āyā*) along the route. Although the army leaders ordered two or three to be beaten and cut down by the sword [for the offence] near the township of Bhilūwāl, yet the evil intentioned mass did not cease taking their prize until they reached the fort and joined the fighting. Relying on treachery, the Infidels came out of the encirclement and advanced to meet them. The blame or merit for the report must be laid at the door of the [original] narrator, but I have heard from some persons that the Afghans of the villages of Sūrī, owing to their sharing their limits of *zamīndārī* with them [the enemy] and, [their bitterness at] the officials’ oppressiveness [against themselves] had a soft corner in their heart for that sect. To appearances, a formidable force [of theirs] accompanied this poor mass, but when there was prospect of battle, the Afghān troops reined round their horses and rode back to their homes. As a result of this unmeritorious act, many lost their courage, until a number fell in the field and gave up their lives in all wretchedness. Spectacular acts were performed by Saiyid ‘Ināyat, resident of village Bhinḍiyan, the above-mentioned Muḥammad Naqī and Muḥammad Zamān Ranghar Rājput. They pushed back the Infidels, by repeated attacks, to the gate of the fort, and there cried out aloud to the poor people [within the fort] to escape if they could use their legs. In this way they secured for many a release from that calamitous torment. When the day set

and the glorious Sun in the heavens draped itself in the veil of the night's darkness, and wind and rain too came in the way of [martial] endeavours, the tumult died down of itself. People also could not find their way to the gate. A group [from the Lahore forces] making use of the night, and some, because they were weakened by anxiety and fatigue, made their way [back] to their homes, becoming the butt of scorn of some and held blameworthy by people at large, for how does it every time become obligatory [only] for those unskilled [in soldiery], and living as recluses, to gird their loins to engage in conquest and bloodshed. In any case from these tumults who survives [but he] that does not have a care for, nor seeks, worldly life?<sup>31</sup>

**His Majesty Muḥammad Mu‘azzam Bahādur Shāh’s march to the Country of the Punjāb in order to suppress the Refractory Sect of the Singhs [Sikhs]...<sup>32</sup>**

In short, at this time the World-Emperor [Bahādur Shāh], after finishing the campaign against the late [Prince] Muḥammad Kām Bakḥsh, had reached Ajmer [on his return march]. The desolated peasantry of Sahrind and Thānesar, and the poor people, deprived of livelihood and money, and the *pīr-zādas* [members of Muslim sufic families] of Sahrind and Sādhaura,<sup>33</sup> being ruined, appeared at the Imperial Court and raised a hue-and-cry over the oppression suffered by them, lodging a bitter complaint. Though the Emperor’s major object, then, was to suppress and punish the mischievous Rājput̃s, he, of necessity, postponed it for another occasion, and directed his attention to securing the destruction of this dissolution-deserving sect. He did not even enter the capital Shāhjahanābād [Delhi], but the victorious camp passed on along a line ten or fifteen *kurohs* away. It was proclaimed through the public crier that no one should go out from the Imperial Camp to any village, and the sky-reaching Imperial banners should be carried directly to Sādhaura and Mukhlispūr. High nobles like Fīroz Khān Mewātī and Mahābat Khān, son of Khān-i Khānān Bahādurshāhī, were sent forward in the van. From Mahābat Khān, no action was seen that could suit the honour of his father or himself. Fīroz Khān [on the other hand] engaged in a bitter battle close to Ainkheda [var. Amīngarh], a high village on the route, in the neighbourhood of Talāori-‘Azīmābād<sup>34</sup> and Thānesar. After an effort and exertion exceeding imagination the Army of Islām was victorious and successful, owing to God’s benevolence and the Emperor’s glory. The carrion-

eating Sikhs, routed and humbled, with tongues lolling out, struck their teeth into the dust of doom. With their long hair tied to their necks they were hung up from the trees. From Bāyazīd Afghān of Qaṣūr, *faujdār* of the Jammu Hills, who, becoming the leader of a caravan of some thousand persons, had been stranded at Pānīpat owing to the closure of the route, much exertion was seen at this time, owing to the presence at his back of the foe-foiling Imperial glory. His brother's son, Shams Khān, with a large army from [Jālandhar] Doāba and Bajwāra, the *faujdārī* of which district was in his charge, came to Sahrind, in accordance with the fate-ordering decree [of the Emperor], and shed the blood of the fleeing Sikhs. Some were miserably killed in the field; others, taking refuge in the fort, were killed with the aid of *rahkala* and *jazā'ir*.<sup>35</sup>

Thus the water that had deserted it returned to the peasant's river of hope, and the times became friendly and sympathetic to those unlucky captives of the dark day of cruelty.

ʿIsā Khān Mā'in, *zamīndār* of the [Jālandhar] Doāb territory guarded his jurisdiction well and barred the road to the country of the Punjāb to those doomed ones. When the Imperial Camp was pitched in the *Dābar* tract, which was the appointed hunting ground of Jannat Makānī [Jahāngīr] [and] Firdaus Makānī [Shāhjahān], that ill-flying falcon of a fox [Banda Bahādur] fled into the fort of Mukhlispūr, which he had named Lohgarh, fixing muskets and *rahkala* on its towers and openings. His Majesty, with relaxed mind, sat in luxury and comfort, while deputing the forces of the princes and the nobles to storm the fort and kill the Infidels. Young men exhibited bravery to the extent of their strength and power. But the stormy winds, destructive floods of the sub-montane tract and the bitterness of the cold rendered men and horses useless and weak. Fire gave no heat except in hearts of stone, and there was no dryness except in the brain of the salamander; the snow had rendered excessively cold the bond [of life] of every living being, and coldness had frozen the warm spirits [lit. smoke] of the heart. The period of the siege extended to two months. What strategem and stroke did not come from that artful deceiver! At last, owing to the disloyalty of some of the persons in the Imperial entrenchments, he made his luckless way in one direction, and going, by way of the mountain ranges of the Barfi Rāja,<sup>36</sup> to the hills of Jammū, raised a tumult there.

Because of this, many of the Imperial officers received censure. Indeed, out of great anger, the Emperor said in wrathful words: "The jackal has escaped from the grasp of so many dogs."



Perforce, Muḥammad Amīn Khān Bahādur, Rustam-Dil and others were deputed to pursue that ill-starred one [Banda]. These persons went forward, brisk and alert, and found him in that country only a short distance away. In order to keep the market warm [i.e. not to bring matters to a conclusion], they kept their reins under control, going forward some *kurohs* in dread and anxiety. Rustam, behaved like Zāl [an old man],<sup>37</sup> and, wherever his hand reached, upon false excuse and imputation of disloyalty, seized and held captive many peasants of Khatuha [Kathua], Narowal and other *parganas*, and distributed them in salary to his troops so that they might take them to the cattle-market of Lahore and sell them there. And that malevolent Antichrist [Banda], owing to the ill-conduct of this ass-like manikin, concealed and hid himself in mountainous country difficult of access. [In the meanwhile] His Majesty, with ease of mind, travelled and hunted through that country [Sādhaura, etc.] and crossing at the ford of Rahla [var. Rahela],<sup>38</sup> proceeded towards the capital city of Lahore.

## II

Printed text, pp.180-184; MS, ff.57b-61a

### **The Account of the Gurū, who is known and famous by the name Banda<sup>39</sup>**

In previous pages, it has been mentioned that a false *Gurū*\* who, during the reign of His Late Majesty Bahādur Shāh Ghāzī, owing to the weakness<sup>40</sup> of the unachieving Rustam-dil and others, who had been slow in his pursuit, was able to wander about in the plain of ignominy and flee into the Northern Mountains. Now, owing to the good fortune of the victorious Emperor [Farrukh Siyar, 1713-19], the time of the destruction of that ill-fated one came near. With a body of his evil-preaching disciples, he came out of the mountains of Jammu and heavily engaged in fighting all the *faujdārs* of that territory. When this was reported to the Imperial Court, the Emperor ordered Muḥammad Amīn Khān and 'Abdu's Ṣamad Khān Diler Jang, [the latter being] appointed Governor of the capital seat of Lahore, to bring about the destruction of that mischievous, noisy trouble-maker. Accordingly, for a time the Mughal forces strove to devastate the habitations of that country and the submontane tract. If, by chance, some of the doomed members of that sect [Sikhs] also encountered them, they were put to the bloodthirsty sword. After some time that black-faced one again disappeared in those parts. Muḥammad Amīn Khān obtained the privilege of returning

to the Imperial Court and 'Abdu's Şamad Khān, coming back to the [headquarters of the] *şūba* assigned to him, gave himself to comfort and luxury.

After one year, a great disturbance affected the people (*ri'āyā*) of the *şūba* of the Punjāb. This was owing to that same cast-off one\* emerging out of the skirt of the mountains with a large host, who battled with the Imperial troops who had been posted to guard their jurisdictions. Owing to the inauspiciousness of the month and year, he [Banda Bahādur], prevailing over<sup>41</sup> most of the [Mughal] commanders, extended his hand of oppression over the *parganas* of Kalānaur and Batālā. Suhrāb Khān, *faujdār* of Kalānaur, and Santokh Rāi, *qānūngo*, who had the heart and capacity for this, gathered a large force of horse and foot and fought with those infidels. Similarly, Shaikh Muḥammad Dā'im, *faujdār* of Batālā, fought resolutely for two quarters of the day: the young troopers fully employed short arms,<sup>42</sup> arrows and muskets, and many well-born warriors lost their lives. In the end, however, no one among the *zamīndārs* or military commanders of this country could obtain fair repute in meeting this dark, calamitous host. Suffering defeat, Muḥammad Dā'im retired to his native place, Piruwal, and sat there. The inhabitants, low and high, of these heart-pleasing places, which rival those in Paradise, were once again devastated, and, turning into nomads, most of them fled to Lahore. Some, because of lack of resources, went in distress to the mountains of Chamba, Dasūha and other places.

The moment the reports of these successive calamities reached the Just Emperor [Farrukhsiyar], obedience-requiring orders were issued to Diler Jang and all the *faujdārs* of the principal *parganas* of the Punjāb to immediately proceed, in concert with the Governor [Diler Jang], to bring about the annihilation of that accursed rebel; otherwise, they would become subject to Imperial censure, which is a reflection of God's wrath. Accordingly, Mīr Aḥmad Khān, *faujdār* of Gujarāt, who, along with a number of Saiyids, was in soldierly exertion, a man above others in this profession and occupation; Irādatmand Khān, *faujdār* of Aimanābād; Nūr Muḥammad Khān, from Aurangābād and Parasrūr; and Shaikh Muḥammad Dā'im, already mentioned, all arrived. Hāfiẓ 'Alī Khān, from *pargana* Haibatpur Pattī, Suhrāb Khān from Kalānaur, Rāja Bhīm Sen Katoch,<sup>43</sup> the troops of Dhrub Dev Jasrotiya,<sup>44</sup> etc., also arrived and took part in the operations. Everywhere they established entrenchments. That sinful infidel [Banda Bahādur] sat in Kot Mirzā Jān, and began building a mud

fort (*garhī-i khām*). 'Ārif Beg Khān, Deputy-Governor of the *Ṣūba* coming out of the City [Lahore], encamped near Shāhganj and undertook vigil until Nawāb Diler Jang after sacking the rebellion-marked [town of] Pathān,<sup>45</sup> reached Kot Mirzā Jān, riding post-haste, to make it in two or three days' marches. That manikin [Banda], not succeeding, in that short time, in digging a trench and building a mud fort to his satisfaction, fled from there, and accompanied by two thousand<sup>46</sup> men betook himself to Gurdāspūr, which is a pleasant place, founded by Bhāi Dūnī Chand, dervish.<sup>47</sup> He stationed himself there, and by cuts from the Shāh Nahr [Shāhjahān's canal] and one or two submontane streams, he drew water to the front of, and around, his fort (*garhī*), creating excessively swampy land.<sup>48</sup> Neither man nor horse could go across it, and one could only after much exertion reach the foot of the fort. Whenever the army of Islām reached near [lit. near enough to hit with the heel] that rebel, they [the defenders] shot arrows<sup>49</sup> from one direction and stationed themselves at a high point in the *garhī* of Gurdāspūra.

Of those [Sikhs] who came out to collect taxes in villages and hamlets far and near, some were captured and were executed. Most, however, fled, changed their clothing, cut off their hair and beard and, coming to Lahore, took refuge there.

I, the writer of these warning-laden pages, was then by way of service, posted under the Deputy-Governor 'Ārif Beg Khān. What bold actions were then seen from these doomed ones! Every day, twice or thrice, forty or fifty of those black-faced ones would come out [of Gurdāspūra] and from outside carry back fodder for their animals. Every time men of this [Imperial] army reached up to them and tried to stop them, they cut the Mughals down with arrows, muskets and short arms, and went on their way. The fear from this force of rebels\* and the sorceries of that rebellious manikin had so deeply struck the hearts of the commanders of this army that all the time they raised their hands in prayer begging of God that he [Banda] come out of his fort (*garhī*) and take to flight, as on previous occasions, so that the need for employment (*hangāma-i naukarī*) and the credit and prestige of the [imperial] servants might continue to be on the increase [without involving much danger to themselves].

When in this way a period of three or four months elapsed. while the siege of the *garhī* continued, officials at the Imperial Court attributed the delay to the negligence and the briskness of the market [of self-interest] of 'Abdu's Ṣamad Khān

[Diler Jang]. Wrathful *farmāns* were issued by His Imperial Majesty addressed to Diler Jang, requiring him to attend to the seizure of that fort immediately and to capture that cast-off rebel alive and bring him to the Court. But God's mercy did not desert 'Abdu's Şamad Khān and saved well-born and honourable men from being killed [in any storming of the fort] by those base, iniquitous [rebels]; and good strategy was allowed to carry the task forward.

As a consequence [of Imperial concern], Qamruddin Khān Bahādur, son of Muḥammad Amin Khān, was also sent from the Imperial Court to reinforce the Nawāb [Diler Jang]. He now arrived and joined in the operations.

At last, after a [further] period of two months and more, owing to a number of causes, such as their confinement, the maddening stench of carcasses and putrid matter, the exhaustion of their store of grain and their dying by starvation, those wicked infidels came down to pleading with importunity and helplessness and made the offer that their base chief would [surrender and] present himself. 'Abdu's Şamad Khān, holding it a piece of good fortune and a confirmation of Imperial glory, took it as a gain and, after giving a pledge and promise of sparing his life, summoned him [Banda] to his presence and reassured him. Nearly two hundred men, half-alive, half-dead, who came with him out of the fort, were put in chains and handed over to custodians (*dāroghas*). That manikin, exempted from collar and chain, was guarded with much vigilance. What now did the Mughal forces not do in laying hands on the hoarded goods of those crafty infidels, and what booty in the fort and the township they did not leave out from sack and pillage!

Nawāb Diler Jang, beating the drum of victory, happy, contented, honoured and elevated, entered the city of Lahore. Wonderful excitement prevailed in the city for a sight of that *bahrūpiya* [imposter] and his companions. The crowds of a thousand *Īds* could not equal it [the crowd now assembled]. In reality all this was due to the miraculous working of the foe-destroying Imperial prestige, a reflection of divine favour and a result of the excellence of the dedication, toil and labour of the Nawāb [Diler Jang] of Mahdī-like virtues, who had captured such an evil Dajjāl [Anti-Christ] with such torment and had made him a prisoner of life-taking Fate.<sup>50</sup> Otherwise, he [Banda] was the same base infidel, who, from the reign of His Late Majesty Muḥammad Mu'azzam Bahādur Shāh, had been the cause of such

distress to God's creatures, and,<sup>51</sup> losing and failing, now [assuming the garb of?] a Muslim, now a Hindu [lit. infidel], he had lived like the wind of a dust storm.

Finally, he [Abdu's Şamad Khān] sent him in the custody of [his son] Zakariyā Khān, along with other prisoners<sup>52</sup> to Shāhjahānābād [Delhi]. He [Zakariyā Khān], having presented himself before His Majesty, received special favours. A fateful order was issued for the execution of the *Gurū*, his son, and the other sweepers [derogatory term for Banda's followers], who joining him in the path of rebellion and conflict, had ravaged a whole world. Accordingly, they put him to death, along with his son of five or six years, near the holy shrine of the tomb of Khawāja Bakhtiyārūddīn Kākī.

## APPENDIX

### The English Report of Banda Bahādur's Arrival as Captive at Delhi

Extract from Letter of John Surman and Edward Stephenson from Delhi to Robert Hedges, President and Governor of Fort William, etc., Council in Bengal, dated 10 March 1716 [OS,=20 March 1716], printed in C.R. Wilson, ed., *The Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, VII(2), *The Surman Embassy*, Calcutta, 1911, reprint, 1931, pp.120-21. Spellings as in the original.

#### Text

The great Rebel Goroo who has been for these 20 years so troublesome in the Subaship of Lahore is at length taken with all his family and attendance by Abdell Summed Cawn the Suba of that province, some days ago they entered the City loaden with fetters, his whole attendance which were left alive being about Seven hundred and eight all severally mounted on Camells which were sent out of the City for that purpose, besides about two thousand heads stuck upon poles, being those who died by the sword in the battle. He was carried into the presence of the King, and from thence to a close prison, He at present has His life prolonged with most of his mutsuddys in hopes to get an Account of his treasure in the several parts of his Kingdom and of those that assisted him, when afterwards he will be executed. For the rest there are 100 each day beheaded. It is not a little remarkable with what patience they undergo their fate, and to the last it has not been found that one apostatized from this new formed Religion.

Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Heading only in the printed ed., not in the Br. Lib. MS (hereinafter referred to as the MS).
- <sup>2</sup> Heading only in the MS and not in the printed ed.
- <sup>3</sup> The meaning seems to be that Gurū Nānak tolerated both such Hindus as followed the customs of their own faith as well as Muslims who did likewise. This becomes clear from sentences which immediately follow.
- <sup>4</sup> The printed ed. omits 'Reality-comprehending.' Has the author confused the Veda with the Vedānta?
- <sup>5</sup> So in the MS (*burj-i Jagarnāth*). In the printed text, *burj* (tower) only.
- <sup>6</sup> Shaikh Farid lived in the 13th century, and, therefore, the reference must be to his successor (*sajjāda-nishīn*) at Pakpatan (Ajodhan). The *Gurū Granth Śāhib* contains Punjabi verses attributed to Shaikh Farid. See Macauliffe, VI, 356-414; also K.A.Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i Shakar*, Aligarh, 1955, pp.121-2.
- <sup>7</sup> The ed. of the printed text, p.297, cites a notice of this saint, which makes him a contemporary of Islām Shāh Sūr (1545-53).
- <sup>8</sup> Of these three divines, Shāh Daulā (d. 1676) is a well-known saint of Gujarāt (Punjab) reputed for public works, including the construction of bridges. See A.C. Elliott, *The Chronicles of Gujarat* (orig. pub., 1902), reprint, [Chandigarh?], 1970, pp.53-61.
- <sup>9</sup> On Sarmad, see K.R.Qanungo, *Dārā Shukoh*, I, 2nd ed., Calcutta, 1952, pp.264-68. His execution is a well-known incident of the early years of Aurangzeb's reign.
- <sup>10</sup> Mirzā 'Askari, titled Wazīr Khān, was of Iranian descent, his family having long been in Mughal service. He held the rank of 2000 *zāt* under Aurangzeb (M. Athar Ali, *Mughal Nobility under Aurangzeb*, 2nd ed., Delhi, 1997, p. 249 at no. 333).
- <sup>11</sup> The practice of display of royal person early in the morning, instituted by Akbar, and regarded in the Mughal Empire as the exclusive privilege of the sovereign,
- <sup>12</sup> The act of kneeling so low as to make the forehead touch the ground, a salutation deemed to be due only to the Mughal Emperor, under Akbar and Jahāngīr.
- <sup>13</sup> It may be noted that this author abstains from directly saying that the Gurū's sons were killed, but the words, "till the night came", suggest that death overtook each of them after sometime.
- <sup>14</sup> I read *chīragī* for *khīragī* (darkness) in the printed text.
- <sup>15</sup> The reference here, of course, is to Banda Bahādur's alleged claim to represent Gurū Gobind Singh.
- <sup>16</sup> Mod. Malerkotla (Punjab).
- <sup>17</sup> *Tuman-dār*, lit. one who has an army of ten thousand men; but by this time *tuman* meant any body of troops.
- <sup>18</sup> So spelt (possible variant: Sajadanand). The name is given as 'Sucha Nand' in Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, I, Bombay, 1950, pp.83-4, and the person is said to have been the *Dīwān* of Sirhind.
- <sup>19</sup> So in the MS. 'Hindu' in the printed text.
- <sup>20</sup> I follow the printed text here. The MS seems to be corrupt here.
- <sup>21</sup> 'Bāj Singh' in Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, op.cit., p.85. According

## Banda Bahadur's Rebellion

- to Sikh tradition (Macauliffe, V, p.239), Gurū Gobind Singh, while despatching Banda to the north, had deputed with him Baz Singh; but he is there said to be a descendant of *Gurū Amardās*, and so a Khatri. (In Sikh sources Baj Singh is, indeed, a Bal Jat. — J.S.G.)
- <sup>22</sup> The Marrals are said to be a Chauhan subcaste, found in the Multan district (*Multan Dist. Gaz.*, 1901-2, p.137).
  - <sup>23</sup> Mukhlispūr is on the left bank of the Yamuna, near the point where the West Yamuna Canal has its source (See Irfan Habib, *Atlas of the Mughal Empire*, Delhi, 1982, Map 8A, 30+, 77+, & Notes, p.27, col.b). But W. Irvine, *The Later Mughals*, I, pp.108-9, has reservations on this identification, and suggests a place half way between Nahan and Sadhaura. Forty *kurohs* (some 90 miles) would, however, be too large a distance from Sadhaura for either place; and one must imagine that the author has made a slip here. For *dābar* see H.M. Elliot, *Memoirs, & c., of the North Western Provinces of India*, ed. J. Beames, II, London, 1869, p.279.
  - <sup>24</sup> An apparent confusion with Gurū Rāmdās, who built the tank, and after whom the place was called Chak Gurū or Rāmdāspura (Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, p.25).
  - <sup>25</sup> *Singhān* in MS (which would be a perfectly legitimate designation for Khālśa Sikhs — J.S.G.) It could be a scribe's error for *Sikhān*, Sikhs, 'g' and 'k' being undifferentiated in Persian writing. The printed ed. has *khirsān*, bears, rough fellows.
  - <sup>26</sup> Akbar was crowned at Kalānaur in 1556.
  - <sup>27</sup> A Muslim mercantile caste held to be the counterpart of the Khatri caste (Denzil Ibbetson, *Panjab Castes*, Lahore, 1916, pp. 256-3).
  - <sup>28</sup> Just a flourish by the author, since Āmul is a town in Ṭabaristān (Iran), whose dimensions could not possibly have been known either to him or to his readers.
  - <sup>29</sup> 'Kharal' in the printed text.
  - <sup>30</sup> I follow the MS here, omitting *wa* after *hasb* and reading *na-pardākḥūa* for *pardākḥūa*.
  - <sup>31</sup> I follow the printed text, not the MS, which seems corrupt here.
  - <sup>32</sup> The MS does not furnish this heading.
  - <sup>33</sup> Much matter found in the MS here is omitted in the printed text.
  - <sup>34</sup> So in MS. 'Talāori and A'ḡamābād' in printed text.
  - <sup>35</sup> *Rakkala* was a light cannon (W.Irvine, *The Army of the Indian Moghuls*, reprint, New Delhi, 1962, 134-5, 139-40). *Jazā'ir* was a large musket or wall piece (ibid., 109)
  - <sup>36</sup> "Barfi Rāja" was the popular name given to the ruler of Sirmur hills, whose capital then was at Nahan.
  - <sup>37</sup> A heavy-handed play on Rustam Dil's name. The Iranian hero Rustam's father was Zāl; and *zāl* means an old man or woman, as well.
  - <sup>38</sup> Could be Rahela, now Sri Hargobindpur — J.S.G.
  - <sup>39</sup> Title only in the printed text; not in the MS.
  - <sup>40</sup> I read *kurizī* for *karpuzhī* in the printed text, and *kurizāt* in the MS. *Charpīda* (=charbīda) in the printed text. MS: *jarid āmda*.
  - <sup>41</sup> *Kotah yarāq*, meaning swords, daggers, etc.
  - <sup>42</sup> As in MS. 'Az Qanaui' in the printed text is a misreading. Katoh was the clan-name of the ruling-family of Kangra. At this time Hamir Chand was the ruler of Kangra, not Bhimsen.
  - <sup>44</sup> For Dhrub Dev of Jasrota, see Hutchison and Vogel, II, pp.571-2.

- <sup>45</sup> Mod. Pathankot. The word *tākhṭ* rules out the object being a person. Thus the editor's reading of Pathan as equivalent to Afghan and then identifying the Afghan as Ḥusain Khān Khweshgi of Qaṣūr (p.181n.) seems uncalled for. From Pathankot one could have reached Gurdāspur in two or three days' marches, but not from Qaṣūr.
- <sup>46</sup> 'Ten thousand' in the MS.
- <sup>47</sup> Grandson of Bhāi Sailo. He had joined Gurū Gobind Singh, but, owing to some differences, separated from him (Macauliffe, *Sikh Religion*, V, pp.129, 133-4). According to the *Gurdaspur Gazetteer (Punjab District Gazetteers)*, ed. B.R. Chopra, Chandigarh, 1979, pp.460-61, Gurdaspur was founded by "Guriya Ji", whose grandson was "Deepak Chand", who had his own following and had received the title "Gurū Ganj Bakhsh" from Gurū Gobind Singh. His *samādhi*-shrine still exists. Are Dūnī Chand and Dīp Chand, then, identical?
- <sup>48</sup> *Chahla*, 'wet, oozy land, miry, puddy, marshy' (S.W. Fallon, *A New Hindustani-English Dictionary*, Banāras, 1879, p.560). The qualifying word *sakht*, hard (*chahla-i sakht*) seems inappropriate, for hard mud would be no good for defence. Professor Grewal suggests, however, that *sakht* may here be used in the sense of 'very much, excessive', so that *chahla-i sakht* would be land that was excessively swampy, and I have rendered it thus accordingly.
- <sup>49</sup> I read *naza'a* for *nargha* in the printed text.
- <sup>50</sup> According to Muslim lore, there would first appear a Dajjāl, who would commit great oppressions, and then a Mahdī ('the rightly guided') who would destroy him.
- <sup>51</sup> I follow the MS, which inserts the conjunction *wa* here.
- <sup>52</sup> *Ajinna-i dīgar*: *ajinnāt* is plural of embryos. The writer apparently uses this word to deny the full status of mature human beings to Banda's followers.



# Banda Bahādur's Rebellion, 1710-16

From Mirzā Muḥammad, *'Ibratnāma*

*Translated by Iqbal Husain*

Mirzā Muḥammad *bin* Mu'tamad Khān bin Dayānat Khān was born either in A.H. 1070/A.D. 1660 or the 30th regnal year of Aurangzeb/A.D. 1687; the author gives both these dates. Belonging to a family of officials of some status, he entered imperial service in 1703, when he obtained a *manṣab* of 150. The *'Ibratnāma* contains his narrative of political events from this year to the dethronement and death of Farrukhṣiyar and the accession of Rafī'u-d Darjāt in 1719. His language while describing the latter event shows that it had just taken place when he was closing his account.

The *'Ibratnāma* gives a description of Banda Bahādur's revolt based on the author's own information. He also furnishes an eye-witness account of the entry of the Sikh leader and his followers in Delhi as prisoners in 1716.

For this translation the Bankipur Library MS has been used. There is a photocopy of the MS in the CAS in History library, Aligarh. It is not well written and some sentences seem corrupt. But some of the errors, such as confusions in years, must go back to the author himself, who was writing apparently in some haste.

The account of the Sikhs and Banda Bahādur's rebellion is taken from two portions in the text, Bankipur MS, ff.39a-46b, and ff.52b-54a. A further passage referring to Banda Bahādur's incursions into the Sahāranpur territory given in the course of a notice of Jalāl Khān Rohila (ff.51a-53b) is omitted, since it adds nothing new as far as the Sikhs are concerned.

The author is prone to use very strong derogatory terms for the Sikhs. But his narrative is important for being so closely contemporary.

## TRANSLATION

I

Bankipur MS, ff.39a-46b

Receipt of Report of Nawāb 'Abdu's Şamad Khān Bahādūr Diler Jang, giving the good news of the capture of Gurū Gobind\* (*sic!*), the head of the faithless Sikhs, and an Account of that wretch\* of a [spiritual] guide [Banda], from the beginning of the writing of this truthful '*Ibratnāma*.

Monday, the 26th Zilhijj 1127 A.H. [23 December 1715] marked the [second] anniversary of the coronation of the King. After the King had risen from the *dīwan*, the report of Nawāb 'Abduş Şamad Khān Bahādūr Diler Jang, containing the news of the capture of the *Gurū*\* along with more than two thousand of those Sikhs at the hands of the holy warriors of the army of Islām, was presented to the King. The drums were beaten to celebrate the victory of Islām, and this continued till the end of the month of the King's coronation. The account of the affairs of the *Gurū* and the Sikhs, i.e. the disciples of the Gurū-guide, is, in summary, as follows:

Around the year nine hundred [1494-95 A.D.] and odd Hijri in the reign of Sikandar Lodī, a mendicant (*faqīr*), Nānak by name, became famous through the performance of heavily ascetic exercises of the Hindus, and by his renunciation and solitude. A large number of the Hindus, becoming his disciples, obtained the designation of "Sikhs". In fact, the said person, according to the customs of the Hindus was a perfect saint and followed the path of devotion and non-violence, and of surrender and submission [to God]. As, after his death, his successors sat in his seat through the passage of time, offerings reached them from the Hindus of the Punjāb, Multān, Tatta (Thatta), and Kābul. Gradually, they came to possess artisans and guards [lit. strong men]. But in appearance they did not abandon the ways of dervishes. During the reign of the late victorious Emperor 'Ālamgīr [Aurangzeb], the mantle of Nānak's successor fell on a person named Gobind. He introduced some new customs in the tradition of Nānak and those who hastened to accept those [innovations], he called "Sikhs

of the Khālṣa". Since he possessed plenty of wealth and property, he began to establish his power over *zamīndārs* of the adjacent territories through warlike means. [On this,] Wazīr Khān, *mutaṣaddī* [officer-in-charge] of *Chakla* Sahrind [mod. Sirhind] sought permission from the Court to bring about his destruction, and repeatedly sent forces against him. In these battles two sons of Gobind were slain, and his affairs worsened greatly. When Shāh 'Ālam the Generous [Bahādur Shāh I] was marching from Peshāwar to Akbarābād [Agra] to fight his brother, His Highness Muḥammad A'ẓam Shāh, the said Gobind obtained the privilege of waiting on him through Mun'im Khān Khān-i Khānān, and he accompanied the Imperial Camp along with the Sikhs, i.e. his disciples, during that march. After the victory [over A'ẓam] he also accompanied the camp to the Deccan. By chance in the Deccan in the year 1120 A.H. [1708-9 A.D.] he was killed in the imperial camp at the hands of an Afghan who had entertained enmity towards him. His\* body was cremated according to the customs of the Hindus; and Ajit Singh, who was popularly known as his son, received the Emperor's favours, and remained in the same manner in the suit of the King.

Next year, which was 1121 A.H. [1709-10 A.D.], an obscure man of dark design, with a strong will and great ambition appeared in some villages of *Chakla* Sirhind [=Sahrind,] and proclaimed that he was the very same Gobind, who had survived the injury and, coming away from there, had arrived here. Some say that his claim was that after his death, he had regained life and God Almighty had promised him victory and success over the Muslims, and he was going to conquer all the territories of India. The Sikhs of Gobind, many out of ignorance and some in the hope of booty and spoils, accepted his claim and a large number of them gathered around him. In the Doab and the country of the Punjāb, whoever was a Nānak-panthi, either made haste to join him in person or sent large amounts of money to him by way of offering. The Sikhs rose in every village. Just as they, out of respect, called Nānak and his successors by the title *Gurū*, and as the murdered Gobind, with whom this person\* deceitfully identified himself, was the *Gurū* of his own time, this unclean piece of impurity also became known as the *Gurū*. In brief, the said *Gurū*, after having collected an abundant number of people, first attacked the *pargana* of Sadhaura, with the *pīrzādas* of which place the murdered [Gurū Gobind] had great enmity, and, by the Will of God the Great and Almighty, he became victorious and fanned

the flames of plunder and rapine. Having put to the sword a large number of people he burnt down the homes of many faithful Muslims. Since at that time his star was in the ascendant, his Sikhs also appeared in some villages of the Punjāb and became dominant there; and these wicked beasts penetrated into the Doāb as well. Wazir Khān, *amīn* and *faujdār* of *chakla* Sahrind, was unable to extinguish this conflagration; and the "*Gurū*"\* went on gaining strength day by day. He sent out his forces in every direction and brought under his control many rich *parganas*. He gave an order for the general massacre of Muslims. Afterwards, he determined upon seizing Sahrind and Sahāranpūr. He had his troops cross the river Yamuna and sent them onwards to Sahāranpūr, while he himself marched towards Sirhind [=Sahrind] with the intention of capturing it. Wazir Khān, along with 12000 horse, whom he had kept for suppressing this seditious conflagration, came out to oppose them and attained martyrdom. A tumult like the Day of Judgement occurred at that battle-field. A large number of people were killed and wounded, and the rest were dispersed all around. Of the people of Sirhind, whoever, upon hearing of this calamity, could manage to flee, escaped, and everyone who stayed in the city recited the Quranic verse: "Everyone who breathes shall taste death". The wicked infidels showed such zeal in killing Muslims, that they did not also spare the children, and, tearing up the wombs of pregnant women put to the sword the unborn babies. In this great calamity, no Muslims could survive except such as concealed themselves in the houses of their Hindu friends.

As for the fierce force of those ill-starred ones [Banda's followers], who had marched towards Sahāranpūr, the moment they crossed the Yamuna river, 'Alī Ḥamīd Khān,' the *faujdār* of that *chakla*, immediately upon learning the news, became so distracted and desperate that he left Sahāranpūr the same day and fled by rapid marches to Delhi. The Sikhs, coming to know that the city was empty [of troops], quickly betook themselves there, and, as was the case with people of Sahrind, the people of that place too either tasted martyrdom or took to flight. In short, after Sahrind and Sahāranpūr came under the possession of the "*Gurū*",\* a great commotion arose among the Muslims of those territories. Whoever could so manage, took his family with him, and abandoning his property, escaped to a place of safety. Since every day the news of arrival of those wicked people spread to every village and town, every one was in need of conveyance and means of transport for his family members and goods, and so the price as

well as hire charges for carriage (*bahal*), camel, bullock, donkey, [etc.,] rose phenomenally. Whoever could afford the means, and obtained it, could get away with honour. He, who was thrifty despite being wealthy, and so could not obtain conveyance owing to the tumult, took to flight on foot, along with his family. During this disaster women who had not seen any place outside the courtyards of their houses, and never walked on foot, had to travel twenty *kurohs* (*kos*) on foot. It took everyone two, three or four days to reach his destination and place of safety. Such people, who due to lack of resources or due to the Will of God, could not leave their houses, and those who were still deliberating on departure — calamity befell them all. The men were put to the sword and the women suffered the affliction of being captured. So Sahāranpur, Būriya, Sādhaura, Chhat, Ambāla, Shāhābād, Thānesar, Sahrind, Pāil, Rūpar, Bahlolpūr, Māchhīwāra, Ludhiāna, etc., the details of which places would be cumbersome, were battered by these ill-famed hosts. All territory from Thānesar to the bank of river Sutlej, excepting the territory of Lakhī jungle, came at one stroke under the control of those cruel, unjust people. Half of the *chakla* of Sahāranpur was also annexed to the dominions of that arrogant ignoramus. In the country of the Panjāb too, many village came into the hands of these error-smitten Sikhs.

At that time, the “*Gurū*” appointed an army of these evil-acting Sikhs, to cross the Sutlej and seize Jālandhar Doāb. That force first captured the township of Rāhon, and acted there in their own unpraiseworthy way. The Muslims of those towns, abandoning their goods and property to the enemy, sought help from Shams Khān Khweshgī, the *faujdār* of the [Jālandhar] Doāb. That brave man, collecting a large number from amongst his own servants as well as a big force from amongst people who had joined him with the intention of waging holy war, marched toward Rāhon and expelled by force those wicked men from that town. In this battle nearly six or seven thousand faithless Sikhs were killed; but of Muslims only a few persons attained martyrdom. After this, they [the Sikhs] abandoned the idea of the conquest of the [Jālandhar] Doāb and turned their attention to the seizure of other territories.

The Sikhs in the [Ganga-Yamuna] Doāb who after the capture of Sahāranpūr, entertained the ambition of conquering that entire territory, suffered much punishment from the swords of the sons and relatives of Jalāl Khān Rūhela, the master of Jalālābād, 7 *kurohs* from Deoband. Thereafter, contenting themselves with

what they had already obtained in the Doab, they turned back from there. The [Sikh] force that had advanced from Thānesar towards Delhi, faltered owing to the fighting strength of Sardār Khān Rājput, *zamīndār* of Narok, a large number of them being killed by that renowned commander. God forbid, if Jalāl Khān from that side and Sardār Khān from this side had not intercepted them, there was none in Delhi who had the courage and the force to repel those ill-fated ones. The cruel Infidels gave orders to destroy mosques and tombs of Muslim saints in all the territories which had fallen into their hands. Few mosques, tombs or *dargāhs* remained that they did not cause damage to.

At the time that the late King Shāh 'Ālam [Bahādur Shāh I] returned from the Deccan and arrived in the territories of the Rājputs, the news of the killing of Wazīr Khān and the successful rising of the faithless Sikhs, which had happened early in 1124 A.H. [1712 A.D.],<sup>2</sup> was conveyed to him. Of necessity, the affair of the Rājputs had to be settled in a way that was not suitable, and he [the Emperor] rapidly proceeded towards the Panjab. Till His Majesty's arrival at Karnal, those ill-fated ones [the Sikhs] continued to stay at their own posts (*thānas*). When the news of the [Emperor's] arrival was established to be true, they first abandoned the *thāna* of Thānesar, and thereafter other *thānas* of the vicinity and retired. Most of them went to Sādhaura near the "*Gurū*",\* thus reinforcing his army. An army [of the Sikhs] went to Sahrind strengthening the fort there. Shāh 'Ālam Ghāzī marched towards Sādhaura and appointed an army of brave men under Muḥammad Amīn Khān Chīn Bahādur to capture Sirhind. After His Majesty reached the village of Dābar,<sup>3</sup> in the way stated above, the "*Gurū*"\* showed impudent defiance for two days and then fled, taking refuge in the hills. The fort of Sahrind was captured through the valour of Chīn Bahādur. Many of those Sikhs,\* were slain.

Nearly three months after this incident, in the beginning of 1123 A.H. [1711 AD], the ill-fated "*Gurū*" appeared out of the hills near Rāmpūr and Bahrāmpūr and let loose a fresh reign of terror in the Bārī Doab. Shams Khān Khweshgī who had at that time been removed from the *faujdārī* of Bet Jālandhar [Doāb], was going home with three hundred brave horsemen. The ill-starred one [Banda Bahādur], who had with him more than twenty thousand horse and foot, [intercepted him].<sup>4</sup> [Shams Khān] turned round and deeming flight as humiliating, despite the small body of men [that he had], he made an attack on that calamitous horde

[lit. sea], killing a number of those attackers.\* He himself attained martyrdom, along with the young men of his own tribe. The “*Gurū*”,\* unaware of the death of Shams Khān, fled away. The next day that he got the [true] news of this event, by that time the Afghans taking the dead body of that hero of the age had covered a considerable distance. Due to this the sacred body of that holy warrior remained safe from the hands of those ill-fated ones. To be brief, when the news of martyrdom of Shams Khān became public, a great commotion arose among the people of the Bāri Doāb. The inhabitants of Batāla and Kalānaur, which are the prominent towns of that area, fled with their kith and kin to places of safety, and took such goods and effects as they could to the city of Lahore and other secure places. Similarly, the inhabitants of the other villages behaved in the same manner and as far as possible left nothing for those ill-fated ones [Sikhs]. The faithless Sikhs, getting news of the migrations from these towns, set up their own *thānas* at various places. They put to the sword such remaining fugitives [as were still on the way], wherever they found them. Then the “*Gurū*” sent a force out of his cruel army, across the river Rāvi, ordering it to lay waste the Rachnāo Doāb. That force sacked Aurangābād, Parasrūr and other villages of that territory. Couplet: “They lit the fire of injustice and set ablaze the houses of a large number of people.” The Emperor, having received information about the renewed insurrection, deputed Muḥammad Amin Khān Chīn Bahādur Fīroz Jang, Ghāzi Khān Bahādur Rustam Jang, and Ḥamid Khān Bahādur, with victory-oriented troops, for the suppression of that wicked one [Banda].

He himself began his march towards the Panjab and reached the city of Lahore in the middle of the year. Having established the imperial camp in the environs of the city, he spent the remaining part of the year there. In the beginning of 1124 A.H. [1712] he breathed his last. During this period Chīn Bahādur remained engaged in the holy war against the Sikhs and showed much determination in destroying them.

After the death of the late Emperor and owing to the growing anarchy at the court, he [Chīn Bahādur] retired from there. In the meantime the “*Gurū*” seeing his opportunity re-captured the town of Sādhaura and endeavoured to build [the fort of] Lohgarh, where he stayed for more than two years. In short after Jahāndar Shāh’s accession to the throne, Chīn Bahādur was deputed once again to exterminate the Sikhs. Zainuddīn Aḥmad Khān, the *faujdar* of *Chakla* Sahrind, was ordered to reinforce

Chīn Bahādūr. Chīn Bahādūr laid seige to Sādhaura for some months, but he could not succeed in expelling him from that place. Towards the end of the year when Jahāndār Shāh reached Akbarabad [Agra] with the object of giving battle to Farrukh Siyar, Chīn Bahādūr was recalled to the Court and the extirpation of that wicked one [Banda] this time too remained suspended. Afterwards when Farrukh Siyar gained the throne, the campaign, was entrusted to Chīn Bahādūr, and In'ām Khān. Dārāb Khān, Daulat Beg Khān and Jānash Khān and other leading Mughal commanders were ordered to accompany him. Zainuddīn Aḥmad Khān was enlisted in the train of reinforcements. 'Abduṣ Ṣamad Khān having been deputed from the Court, in the beginning of the year 1125 A.H. [1713 A.D.], reached Sadhaura, and exerted greatly in the extirpation of those accursed ones, and having caused the capture of Sadhaura and Lohgarh, killed\* a large number of those Sikhs. The black-faced "*Gurū*,"\* this time again, entered the hills and disappeared there. This was in the beginning of the year 1126 A.H. [1714].

'Abduṣ Ṣamad Khān Bahādūr Diler Jang went to the Court and, according to the Emperor's order, marched towards Ajmer and soon returned from there. He was ordered to proceed to Lahore, having been appointed Governor thereof. On reaching Lahore, he marched to Multan to suppress some of the seditious *zamīndārs* and repeatedly punished that rebellious crew. In the meantime the "*Gurū*"\* once again came out of the hills and engaged himself in raising rebellion in the Bārī Doāb, plundering the territory and people. 'Abduṣ Ṣamad Khān having got the news of the appearance of that ill-fated one, riding as fast as lightning and wind, returned from the place where he was and besieged the "*Gurū*"\* and his Sikhs in Gurdāspūra. Keeping in view the misery and plight of the people and territory, he exerted himself, heart and soul, to extirpate these Sikhs. He besieged them for one year in such a rigorous manner that from nowhere could they receive food, lead, or gunpowder. During this period heavy battles took place between the Muslims and the Infidels, around the lines of the siege. In these battles countless people from amongst those rebels\* [Sikhs] were slain or captured. He [Banda] (vainly) sought a route to flee by. At last those doomed\* ones driven near to death by lack of provisions and subsistence, sent a message to the Khān Ghāzī ['Abduṣ Ṣamad Khān] asking him to accept a huge amount of money as present (*peshkash*), [in return for which] he should open a route for them to flee by. That great soldier saw that to



take a bribe on this occasion would be against piety, and relying upon [his own] courage increased his exertions in the task of extirpating those Sikhs. Now that they lost hope on all counts, they sent a fresh message, couched in the language of humility, that ['Abdu's Şamad] Khān Diler Jang should assure them safety of life and seizing their arms from them send them to the Imperial Court. Whatever the Emperor would order in their case, they would accept, heart and soul. The Khān Ghāzī accepted these terms. The Muslim warriors entered the fort and the "*Gurū*",\* along with over two thousand armed persons, having surrendered their arms to the Muslims, came out of the fort. He [Banda] saw Khān Ghāzī, who made all of them, including their deceitful leader, prisoners, and posted trustworthy men as guards over them. This incident took place on Wednesday, 21 Zī'lḥijj 1127 A.H. [18 December 1715]. In short, the valorous Khān sent a report of this great victory to the Court. It was ordered that Khān Ghāzī should despatch those accursed people under the escort of Qamruddīn Khān Bahādur, son of Nawāb I'timādu'd Daulah, the son of Chīn Bahādur, and Zakariyā Khān Bahādur, his ['Abdu-ş Şamad Khān's] own son, to the Court. And so, according to the Imperial order, this was done. The two young nobles (*amīrs*) taking those ill-fated persons with perfect care and alertness entered the city of Delhi on Thursday, 17 Rabi' I of the said year [*sic!* Should be 1128 AH, =11 March 1716], and obtained the privilege of presenting themselves before the Emperor, as will be recorded in the subsequent pages in some detail, God willing.

## II

MS, ff.52b-54a

**The entry into Shahjahabad [Delhi] of the warriors of the Army of Islām, i.e. the Mughal Tūrānī commanders with the Sikh captives and prisoners, along with the "*Gurū*"\* with his sons, the head of those hell-destined ones,\* all deserving to be killed, and all of those being killed every day in groups of hundreds, and an Account of how they [the commanders] entered the city with those dreaded persons. God be praised!**

On Thursday 17 Rabi' I the year stated above [11 March 1716], the victorious holy warriors brought the "*Gurū*"\* as prisoner and under custody to the capital, Shāhjahānābād, and entered the fort in this state that the above named (*gurū*) was sitting in an iron

cage placed on the back of an elephant, wearing a *kimkhwāb jāma* [long heavy skirted Court dress] of pomegranate-flowered gold brocade, and a gold embroidered turban of fine red cotton cloth. One of the soldiers from amongst the Tūrānī Mughal retainers of Muḥammad Amīn Khān, with a drawn sword, stood behind him. In the front of the elephant of that wretch, the innumerable heads of the Sikhs killed, were raised on the points of bamboo poles. In between a [dead] cat was put on the top of a bamboo pole, denoting that every living being found with that condemned man\* in Gurdāspur had been captured, and none of them could escape alive from the hands of the holy warriors. Behind the elephant carrying that wretch came the faithless ill-fated Sikhs said to number over seven hundred and forty. All of them were seated on camels, in two pairs on each, without saddles. One hand of each man was attached to his neck by a two-armed wooden frame, closed by an iron pin. On their heads were high caps of ridiculous shape made of sheep-skin. A few who were the principal men and companions of that wretch\* [Banda Bahādur] and rode nearest to the elephant, were put in sheep skins with the woolly side outwards, so that to look at they resembled bears. Three or four of his principal men had their hands in the wooden frame with caps similarly adorned. After the cavalcade of these wretches had passed, Nawāb Muḥammad Amīn Khān Chīn Bahādur Nuṣrat Jang, accompanied by his son, Qamruddīn Khān, and his son-in-law, Zakariyā Khān Bahādur, son of 'Abduṣ Ṣamad Khān Diler Jang, coming in the rear, entered the city. That doomed one\* was brought into the fort and paraded before the Emperor. It was ordered that he be detained in the prison of retribution for some days. The Sikh followers of his\* were also exempted for some days from being executed.

On this day [of their arrival] I went to the Salt Market to witness the event and accompanied them from there to the Imperial Fort. Of the people of the city there were few who did not come to see the humbling of those rebels.\* Large crowds gathered in every lane and market such as had seldom appeared before. The Muslims were in a happy and festive mood. Yet many of those ill-fated ones [the Sikhs], who had come as prisoners in this condition, insisted on standing fast by their villainy. There was no sign of humility and submission on their faces. Rather most of them, riding on the camels' backs, kept singing and reciting melodious verses. If any one in the lanes and *bāzār* reminded them of the cruelties they had committed, which brought them to this condition, they gave immediate and manly retorts, and attributed

their capture and humiliation to the doings of fate. If any one told them that they would now be executed, they replied, "Let them kill us! We do not fear death. Had we feared it, how could we have fought so many battles with you? We have fallen in your hands only because of hunger and lack of provisions; otherwise, you would have come to know of our bravery far more than has been witnessed till now."

To be short, for some days these ill-fated ones were kept in prison. Finally, orders were given for their execution. Thus on Tuesday, the 22nd of the above mentioned month [16 March 1716], one hundred men among them were brought out and beheaded in front of the *Chabūtra-i kotwālī* towards the Tarpolia. In the same way one hundred persons were daily executed. Thus in one week's time all of them were put to death. On Wednesday the 23rd of the month [17 March], I went to witness their execution, but by the time I reached there, the executions were over; the bodies of those persons had just fallen, however, and were writhing in blood and dust.

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Notes

- <sup>1</sup> He is called 'Alī Ḥamīd Khān Qanauji on f.83a, where this incident is again described.
- <sup>2</sup> This date is erroneous. See below, where a later event is placed early in A.H. 1123.
- <sup>3</sup> *Dābar* means low-lying country, floodland. But here it seems to be used as a place-name.
- <sup>4</sup> Some words are obviously omitted here in the MS.

## 12

### Banda Bahādur's Rebellion, 1710-16 From Muḥammad Hādī Kāmwar Khān, *Tazkiratu's Salāṭīn Chaghataī*

*Translated by S. Ali Nadeem Rezavi*

Some time in 1724, a retired Mughal official and scholar, Muḥammad Hādī Kāmwar Khān, completed a full-scale history of the Mughal dynasty. This was in two volumes, the first brought down to the death of Jahāngīr (completed, 1723), and the other, to 21 January 1724, when it ends suddenly. The portion of Vol.II, giving a narrative of events from Bahādur Shāh's accession (1707) onwards is exceptionally important, since here the author directly draws on official and semi-official *sawāniḥ* and *waqā'i* (news reports, especially of the Court), supplemented by his own observations. The chronological framework is thus strong, and the work is most helpful in fixing dates.

The account of Banda Bahādur's rebellion is similarly drawn from official reports, but there is a vivid eye-witness description of the battle between his forces and the Mughal troops under Emperor Bahādur Shāh himself in the hills near Sādhaura. The translation is made from Muzaffar Alam's edition of the latter portion (covering the period 1707-24) of Vol.II, published from Aligarh/Bombay, 1980.

#### TRANSLATION

##### I

Pp.93-94

Among the various occurrences of this year [Shāh 'Ālam

4 R.Y.= AD 1710] is that a person who was an ignoramus, false in religion, and an outcast, had a few months previously appeared in the Siwālik hills and became famous for his spiritual illuminations and miraculous powers. A large number of persons belonging to the class of sweepers and tanners, and the community of *banjāras* and others of base and lowly castes, assembled around him and became his disciples. The person\* gave himself the title of “Fat’h Shāh”. First, he ravaged the township of Sādhaura and after that he destroyed and burnt a large number of vilages and towns and, having killed the Muslim inhabitants and their families, he headed towards Sahrind [Sirhind]. Wazir Khān had since long been holding the *faujdārī* of that place; he was descended from Wazir Khān Akbar Shāhi [a noble under Akbar]. He [Wazir Khān] came out for a distance of 8 *kurohs* from Sahrind and a fierce battle and heavy slaughter took place, and his principal officers were killed. He too was driven by his sense of pride to engage these faithless heretics and so tasted the drink of martyrdom. His son, relatives and friends and the *pīrzādas* [men of mystic families] of Sahrind, along with their families, fled towards the Capital [Delhi]. These rebels\* who were as numerous as ants and locusts, reached Sahrind in a twinkling of the eye, and collected about rupees two crores in cash and goods from the effects of the above mentioned Khān and a few lakhs from the effects of Suchānand, his *peshkār* (clerk) and other Muslims of this place. They left no stone unturned in inflicting insult and humiliation and burnt that beautiful town and its good buildings. They strengthened its fort and turned their attention to other towns and villages. So one army of theirs\* went towards Lahore and sacked Parasrūr, Aimanābād [Emanabad] and other old prosperous settlements. A great calamity also befell Shāhābād, Thānesar and other towns, and those settlements too were razed to the ground; the mosques too were destroyed. They then dispersed towards Sahāranpūr and Būriya. Out of evil-heartedness and natural villainy, they slew unweaned Muslim children, winning for themselves a place in hell. After these distressing events were reported to the Court, Imperial *farmāns* and orders were issued to Khān-i Daurān Bahādur, the Governor of Awadh, Muḥammad Amīn Khān Chīn Bahādur, *faujdār* of Murādābād, Khān-i Khānān Bahādur, the Governor of *ṣūba* Allahabad, and Saiyid ‘Abdullāh Khān Bāraha, that they should proceed to the Capital [Delhi] and, in consultation with Nizāmu’l Mulk Āṣafu’d-daula, set out to punish this rabble.

## II

P.103

It was reported to the Court that Shamsuddīn Khān, *faujdār* of Doāba Bet Jālandhar, engaged the rebels\* in a battle on 19 Sha'bān [13 October 1710], putting many to the sword and obtaining victory. The Emperor observed: "This is put to his credit."

....

Rustam Dil Khān Bahādur reported that on the fourth of the present month [Ramazān, = 27 October 1710], Fīroz Khān Mewātī engaged the rebels\* in battle between Indrī and Karnāl. Cutting off three hundred heads, he sent them to the Court. The Emperor observed: "Put this to his credit." In reward of his good performance he was appointed *faujdār* of Sahrind, and six robes of honour were conferred on him and his colleagues.

On the 18th [of Ramazān, = 10 November 1710], the Imperial Camp was set up at the masonry bridge at Karnāl. Rustam Dil Khān submitted that the followers of that man\* [Banda Bahādur], who had established themselves at Thānesar and other towns and villages, have fled upon the approach of the Imperial army. The Bakhshīu'l Mamālik "Amīru'l Umarā Nuṣrat Jang was ordered to prepare a roll of the troops, this being as follows: In the train of the elder Prince: 31,000 horse; in the train of each of the three other Princes: 15,000 horse; with Jumdatu'l Mulk [Mun'im Khān]: 11,000 horse; with Mahābat Khān: 7,000 horse...

On 22nd of that month [14 November 1710] the Imperial camp was set near A'zamābād Talāori, which had been renamed 'Ālamgīrpūr. Rustam Dil Khān presented to the Emperor a gold-embossed shield which Fīroz Khān had seized from the rebels\* and sent to the Court. He reported that the said [Fīroz] Khān, beating and repulsing the rebels,\* had advanced from Thānesar to Shahabad ...

## III

Pp.105-108

On the sixth of Shawwāl [28 November 1710], the Emperor marched from the vicinity of Shāhābād to encamp near village Aukālā. Muḥammad Amīn Khān Chīn Bahādur was ordered to chastise the accursed ones. It was reported that the wretch [Banda Bahādur] has sent three thousand horse and three thousand foot from Sādhaura to this side to establish entrenchments. Rustam Dil Khān Bahādur reported that the base rabble marching into the

garden of Ya'qūb Khān, fought a battle with the Afghāns, 'Umar Khān and Zaid Khān, and, being discomfited, have fled into the fort of Sahrind. Orders were issued that Muḥammad Amīn Khān Chīn Bahādur should march immediately and lay siege to Sahrind. On the thirteenth [5 December 1710] after three marches, the Imperial camp was set up in the vicinity of Sādhaura. The army of the rebels\* fled and took shelter in the hills. Three hundred heads of the rebels,\* a few *nishāns* (banners) and rockets (*bāns*) [of the enemy] sent by Muḥammad Amīn Chīn Bahādur and Shams Khān were shown to the Emperor. It was repeatedly represented to the Emperor by young and old that the ill-fated wretch was so expert in magic and sorcery as to exceed in skill the Samaritan sorcerers. Flames of fire [it was said] come out of his banners (?) and rockets, and his followers seldom receive wounds from swords and spears. From such baseless talk the Emperor, nobles and soldiery were much worried and perplexed. A *farmān* was issued to Rustam Dil Khān Bahādur that the advance camp (*peshkhāna*) of the King should be sent ahead, to be fixed at an appropriate place and it be guarded against the mischief of that rabble [Banda's followers], and they should be vigilant. At the time of his departure a special ear-cap was bestowed upon him. On the fourteenth [6 December] it was reported to the Emperor that, as per orders, Jumdatu'l Mulk Khān Bahādur and Mahābat Khān Ghālib Jang, along with their troops, and Afzal *Bakhshī* along with the retainers of Prince Rafī'u'sh Shān had proceeded in escort of the Advance Camp.

On this same date, the rebels\* recieved chastisement from the force of Imperial glory. The details of this incident are as follows: when Rustam Dil Khān Bahādur took the Imperial Advance Camp to a distance of two *kurohs*, by the official measure, from the Imperial Camp, the ill-fated rebels\* suddenly appeared in the plain and attacked with arrows, rockets and musket shot. The said Khān swooped upon that rabble like a falcon falling on a pigeon, and boldly engaged them. After brave endeavours and heroic attacks, he laid many of them to dust and some of their chieftains also lost their lives. But they also compelled many of the holy warriors [Imperial soldiers] to taste martyrdom and inflicted injuries on a large number. They continually received reinforcements. I was present in the Prince's army and saw with my own eyes that each person from amongst the rebels\* came out and engaged in battle with the brave soldiers of the Imperial army, and after much endeavour and effort was put to the sword by the holy warriors. At the same time the Imperial army and the retainers

of the high nobles surrounded and attacked them from all sides, making obsolete the exploits of [the ancient heroes,] Rustam and Isfandyār. A great battle and heavy slaughter took place. Around one thousand five hundred from amongst that evil group along with two of their pseudo-commanders were killed. From the victorious army. Fīroz Khān Mewātī's nephew attained martyrdom and his son was wounded. Around three or four hundred persons from amongst the Imperial soldiers and noble's retainers were wounded.

Around sun-set that doomed host broke up, and, receiving a severe blow, scurried towards the hills. The great nobles caused the drums of victory to be beaten, and the flutes of success were blown. Advancing to a distance of around one and a half *kurohs*, the Advance Camp was pitched. Jumdatu'l Mulk Khān-i Khānān and his son, Mahābat Khān, stood guard on the Imperial Camp. Rustam Dil Khān Bahādur, Afzal Khān and other royal officers advanced a further half *kuroh* and established an assault post on the banks of the River Som. This river had a small amount of water, and on the other side of the river was a plain full of trees. The whole night there was much strange noise; and full guard was mounted and vigilance exercised throughout the night. After this victory was reported [to the Emperor], the battle was named after Rustam Dil Khān. This was also proper since heroic deeds were witnessed from him on that day: Though his companions could not bear the brunt and had fled in different directions, he along with forty or fifty horse of his own had stood the ground and did not let the impudence of the enemy overawe him until the whole army joined in the battle and drove away the rebels.\* He was favoured with the title of Ghāzī Khān Rustam Jang. His *manṣab* was enhanced to 4000/3000....

On 7th [17th?] Shawwāl [29 November (9 December?) 1710] the Emperor entered the Royal Camp which had been pitched on the banks of River Som. The Jumdatu'l Mulk Khān-i Khānān and Mahābat Khān Bahādur had the privilege of presenting themselves. They were ordered to leave the next day to scout the entrenchments established by the rebels\* under the hills. Prince Rafī'u'sh Shān was also ordered to go and make an inspection, and if that doomed group showed impudence, he was to severely chastise that hellish crew.



IV

Pp.108-113.

**The Defeat of the Doomed Sect,\* False in religion, who call themselves the Followers of Nānak, when they are not the Followers of any old Religion.**

On Friday, 19th Shawāl or 18 Āzar month, 4th R.Y. / AH 1122 [11 December 1710], which was a Friday, the Imperial forces under the command of Prince Rafi'ū'sh Shān started for the skirt of the hills of Dābar.<sup>1</sup> The royal forces were formed in the following fashion: The Prince led the van of the Imperial forces, ahead at a quarter of a *kuroh*. Rāo Udit Singh Bundela commanded the van of the army of the Bakhshi'ul Mulk. Jumdatu'l Mulk Khān-i Khānān [Mun'im Khān], along with his sons, Bakhshi'ul Mulk Mahābat Khān and Khān-i Zamān, marched in the right wing, under the guidance of some persons acquainted with that tract. In their van were the forces of Rāo Satrsāl Bundela and Islām Khān Bahādur, the *Mīr-i Ātish* (head of artillery). Ḥamiduddīn Khān and Prince 'Aẓimush Shān's officers and Jahān Shāh's men also marched with him.

Having determined to write only the true facts, I now leave the testimony of the [official] reports (*waqā'i'*) and proceed to put into writing what I myself saw without ornamentation of any sort. One-fourth quarter of the day had not passed when Jumdatul Mulk Khān-i Khānān along with his colleagues rapidly moved forward upon the entrenchments of the rebels,\* that had been established on the hill tops. He launched an attack and a fierce battle ensued with cannon and musket. The warriors, not caring for the enemy's daring in their own love for martyrdom, brought down those doomed ones from the hillocks, by their arrows and musket fire. From the flashing of swords and spears, it appeared that many of the infidels died from sword thrusts as well. About noon the Khān-i Khānān advanced up to the fortified seat of the doomed ones, which they called Lohgarh. Much endeavour and effort was put in from both sides and the market of giving and taking life became brisk. By that time, the Imperial forces, crossing over the plain ground, reached to a distance of a quarter *kuroh* from the wall of Lohgarh. One or two cannon shots fired from the top of the hill fell on the Imperial army, but due to God's Grace no one was hurt. Amīru'l Umarā Bahādur Nuṣrat Jang went slowly [lit. 'drawing back the reins'] and kept on sending the message to the Emperor that caution required one to proceed slowly. Although this appeared to be a piece of advice based on farsightedness, yet

to some farsighted ones it appeared that the negligence and dilatoriness was due to the mutual ill-will and factiousness found among people of the world. The Emperor, to keep him satisfied, stopped for a short while to have his meal in his tent.

Just before the afternoon prayers, heavy smoke and a loud uproar came from the entrenchments of the infidels. I, owing to the ignorance of youth, separated from the Prince's forces, in company with my adopted [son], Khidmatyāb Khān, Khawāja Amānullāh, Qūsbeḡī of Prince Muḥammad Ibrāhīm, and some others, and proceeded towards the encampment of the infidels. After reaching within an arrow-shot distance of that mud-fort, we drew our reins when a cannon-ball fired from [a gun] made from a tamarind tree came from the top of the hillock and fell on the neck of the horse of a friend of mine. But due to the Grace of God, no harm came to the horse. For a moment both the horse and its rider were rendered senseless, but soon recovered. Just then, Balūch soldiers of the Imperial forces, who had gone inside the fort came out supporting the head and shoulders of an Afghān who had received burns from a gun-powder explosion. From what they said we learnt that the Imperial troops had attacked the fort and were engaged in killing and plundering; and the devoted defenders of that doomed sect were resisting till they were slain by the holy warriors, and that on some hill-tops the doomed rabble were still ready to give fight. Some of them had come into the building at the top of a hill which that person of false religion [Banda] had named Sitāragaṛh and from where he was shooting arrows and muskets. I along with my companions entered the infidels' entrenchments, and had the sight of what the plunderers [from the Mughal forces] were doing. The plundering Balūch, the Rohila Afghāns and Balūch of the Imperial Camp, and the boy-retainers from Kābul, were engaged in pillage and were making captive and taking away whole families of women and children of that doomed rabble; they were burning their homes and huts and plundering cash and goods beyond computation. It was from the hands of these pillagers that many gun-powder magazines caught fire, burning many [to death]. The son of Suchānand, the *peshkāṛ* of the late Wazīr Khān and a group of Muslim men and women, whom on that day in their flight that evil crew [Banda's followers] had killed, were found beneath some stones. On seeing such a sight, if one had a heart, one could not but break down and wonder on the changes of fortune.

At that time an Imperial officer, Mirzā Rukn by name,

came from the van and reported that fighting and killing was going on at the passages in the hills and Rustam Dil Khān Bahādur on reaching a white building on the hillock had encircled it, believing that warring Infidel [Banda] himself was inside that building. [He said, however, that] what he believed to be true was that that person of false religion was really sitting under that tent on that hillock and from there watching the endeavours of his devoted followers. His route [of retreat] is quite outside this hillock [which Rustam Dil Khān had encircled].

We were engaged in this conversation when Rāja Udīt Singh Bundela, goaded by the taunts of his rivals like Satrsāl Bundela, was moved to separate himself from the Imperial forces and rush towards that very hillock [containing Banda's tent]. His mounted musketeers occupied a hill-top equal in height to that hillock and began firing from there. That evil one,\* who was in that tent with his chosen followers, became desperate and like a demon of the wild, in the depth of despair, escaped by the other side of the hillock. After his flight many of the hillocks which were infested by the rebels,\* became empty of them. The said Rāja reached that hillock and through musket fire sent to their death many of the doomed ones who had fled to hills and valleys.

Also by the same device in a befitting manner, the Khān-i Khānān's companions proceeding bravely reddened their hands with the blood of those infidels. Near the time of the sunset prayers, none of the rebels\* remained, except those who still fought in the white building. All the wealth, goods, women and children, horses and camels of that doomed sect fell into the hands of the victorious army. The Khān-i Khānān left Rustam Dil Khān to prosecute the siege of that building and himself proceeded, according to imperial orders, along with his sons and companions and the Prince's army to the Imperial camp, to submit a report of the battle. Since in that noise and tumult no one knew what had happened to that rebel\* [Banda], he reported that he was being taken prisoner and was being brought a captive. He received much praise and appreciation [from the Emperor]. I, who reached the Imperial camp, saw that the Prince and the Amīru'l Umarā Bahādur were sitting just where they had stood, by imperial orders, and till midnight the noise of battle in the hills, which were nearby, continued to be heard. In late hours of the night a very terrifying sound came so much so that the earth beneath the camp shook. The Imperial *harkāras* (intelligence-gatherers) having arrived, reported that the noise was due to the bursting of the wooden gun, which the doomed crew

had constructed from tamarind-wood and had been firing. At midnight they filled it with gunpowder [and setting it on fire] exploded that gun and fled.

On 20th of Shawwāl [12 December 1710] Rustam Dil Khān captured all the rebels\* who were fighting in the building, and brought them before the Emperor along with five elephants, three cannon pieces, seventeen gun-carts, one canopy (*sāibān*), and a few silver sticks, belonging to that rebel [Banda]. He received much praise, and one female elephant out of that booty was conferred on him. According to imperial orders, Sarbarāh Khān, *kotwāl*, put to the sword twelve companions of that rebel\* [Banda], of whom the leader was a tobacco-seller, named Gulābā.

Since it was destined that the rebel\*[Banda] would receive punishment only in the reign of His Majesty's grandson, Emperor Farrukhsiyar, that infidel, of false religion, was able to escape to safety, despite all the effort of the Emperor, the Prince, and so many high nobles. This displeased the Emperor, and he was not happy after this victory.

*Farmāns* were sent to the chief of Srinagar [Garhwal] and the chief of Nāhan [Sirmur state] that they should capture that infidel and send him [to the court].... On 25th [17 December 1710] nearly twenty lakh rupees, including *ashrafis* [gold coins] were collected from Lohgarh after digging up the ground. On the 26th towards the end of the night it began to rain and there was a hailstorm too. ... On 2 Zīqā'd, [23 December] the Emperor moved camp and stay was made at the village of Pūrī. Ḥamid Khān Bahādur brought Bhūp Prakāsh, son of Hari Prakāsh, *zamīndār* of Nāhan, to the imperial Court. His Majesty ordered that he be imprisoned.

## V

Pp.119-20

[Events of Regnal Year 5 of Bahādur Shāh]

[As Bahādur Shāh marched slowly from the vicinity of Lohgarh (Banda's fort) towards Lahore] on the fourth of Ṣafar [24 March 1711], it was ordered by the Emperor that Bhūp Prakāsh, the chief (*zamīndār*) of Nāhan should be put in the iron cage that had been made for the ill-mannered rebel\* [Banda] and be taken with all care to the capital [Delhi], to be imprisoned in the fort of Salīngarh.<sup>2</sup> This was done. His mother had sent to the Imperial Court thirty and odd persons of that base sect [Sikhs], so as to secure her son's release.<sup>3</sup> They were executed. The Emperor

observed that unless she sends him [Banda] as captive, his [Bhūp Prakāsh's] release is difficult.

**B**

Pp.125-6, 129

18th [Rabi' II, =5 June 1711], ... it was reported that Shams Khān [ex-*faujdar* of Doāb Beth Jālandhar] and his brother had tasted martyrdom in a battle with the base ones [Sikhs]. 'Īsā Khān Mā'in was appointed deputy-*faujdar* of Doab Beth Jālandhar and honoured with a *manṣab* of 1500 *zāt*, 1000 *sawār*. On 23rd of that month [10 June], the Imperial Camp was pitched near the village of Hoshiārpūr [Jālandhar Doab, on the Emperor's way to Lahore].... It was reported to the Emperor that 'Īsā Khān had inflicted much punishment [in battle] on the rebels.\* Since he was one of the suit of the eldest Prince, the Prince received the gift of a robe of honour, sword and ornamented dagger... On the 28th [15 June] it was reported to the Emperor that Muḥammad Amīn Khān Chīn Bahādur and Ghāzī Khān Bahādur Rustam Jang [new titles of Rustam Dil Khān] had overtaken the rebel\* [Banda] near Parasrūr and inflicted a heavy defeat on him. He, in a very devastated condition, fled into the Mountains of Jammu. To each of the two commanders, were sent a *farmān*, a robe of honour, a turban ornament (*jīgha*) and a sword with a bejewelled scabbard.

....

On the 19th [Rajab, 31 August 1711] it was reported that Ghāzī Khān Rustam Jang [Rustam Dil Khān] came away, without orders, from the pursuit of the rebel\* [Banda] and has alighted in his house. Stern orders were issued to Islām Khān Bahādur, the *Mīr Ātish* [Chief of Artillery], Mahābat Khān Bahādur, Mukhlīṣ Khān Bahādur and Sar Barāh Khān, the *Kotwāl*, that he should be arrested and imprisoned in the fort of Lahore.

**VI**

[Initial phase of Reign of Farrukh Siyar]

Pp.186, 189

[On 15 Jumāda II 1125, 9 July 1713] Keshav Rāo, *Harkāra* [Intelligencer] presented a report to the Emperor that on the 9th of the month [3 July], 'Abdu'sh Ṣamad Khān and Zainuddin Aḥmad Khān had a battle with the rebels.\* Many of those doomed ones were put to the sword and, from the Imperial forces, Baqā Beg, etc., tasted martyrdom.

On 20th [of Ramazān, 10 October 1713], Keshav Rāo, *Harkāra*, presented a report to the Emperor, that the rebels,\* fleeing from Sādhaura have taken the route of Dābar, many being killed and wounded.

## VII

Pp.208-23

[Fourth Regnal Year of Farrukh Siyar]

During these times [around 15th Rabi' I, = 21 March 1715] the news constantly arrived from the Panjāb that that infidel of false religion [Banda], who in the late reign of Khuld Manzil [Bahādur Shāh], having suffered much chastisement, had hidden himself in the ravines of the hills, had now come out of the mountains with a huge host and razed many of the Panjab towns to the ground, extending the hand of cruelty and oppression over the people. A *farmān* was issued to 'Abdu's Şamad Khān Diler Jang, that he should personally undertake to chastise that heretic. Qamruddīn Khān Bahādur, son of I'timāduddaula, Afrāsiyāb Khān, the 3rd Bakhshī, Muẓaffar Khān Bahādur, *Rāja* Udit Singh Bundela, *Rāja* Gopal Singh Bhadauria and many other nobles, honoured with robes of honour, horse and elephant, were ordered to join the expedition against him.

...

The thirteenth of that month [Rabi' II, = 18 April 1715] it was reported that the doomed ones\* had established themselves in Gurdāspur, and 'Abdu's Şamad Khān Bahādur and other nobles had laid siege to it, and were engaged in setting up batteries and digging entrenchments. I'timāduddaula was ordered to write to them with emphasis that that heretic, together with his dependants must be either killed or captured.

Twenty-sixth [1 May 1715] ... From the news received from the Panjab it was reported that the Imperial forces had driven the besieged to dire straits, and every day as a party of the rebels\* comes out it gets slain.

...

From the 26th of that month [Zi'lḥijja, 11 December 1715] the assembly of the celebration of the victory over Mu'izzuddīn [Jahāndar Shāh] was held in the Diwān-i 'Ām... During the noise, music, merry-making and joyousness [of the celebration], I'timāduddaula Bahādur presented to the Emperor the report of 'Abdu's Şamad Khān Bahādur Diler Jang, giving the good news of the capture of the heretic\* [Banda], with his relations

and dependants. The Emperor offered double prayers to express thanks and made the occasion more joyous and merrier; the nobles offered congratulatory salutations.

[Fifth Regnal Year]

Fifteenth [Rabī' I, = 9 March 1716]: It was reported [to the Emperor] that Qamruddīn Khān Bahādūr, son of I'timādu'ddaula, and Zakariyā Khān Bahādūr, son of Khān Bahādūr Diler Jang, have brought the heretic\* [Banda] with his principal men and companions, who had been taken prisoner on 21 Zilhijja [6 December 1715], and are encamped near Agharābād. The order was issued that I'timāduddaula Bahādūr should go there and bring that doomed crew, in a manner that is suitable for this base gang, to the Imperial Presence. On the 17th of that month [11 March], I'timāduddaula Bahādūr brought into the Fort, that chief of the heretics, placed in an iron cage, along with his principal men and companions, made to wear wooden-hats and to appear strange and ridiculous. To see this doomed\* crew, so many people gathered from the city and suburbs that it was difficult to move in the roads and streets, and hard to breathe. The above-mentioned rebel\* [Banda], along with Jai Singh, and another, that is, two persons, who were his principal men, were handed over to the *Mīr Atish* Ibrāhīmuddīn Khān to be incarcerated in the Tarpoliya, and his three-year old son, his wife and the son's nurse were handed over to Darbār Khān, Superintendant (*Nāẓir*) of the Harem. Six hundred and ninety-four persons from amongst his followers were handed over to Sar Barāh Khān, the *Kotwāl*, so that every day a party from amongst them might be killed by the sword by the executioners.

The suppression of this tumult was only due to the Emperor's rising good fortune whereby this was achieved through the courage and bravery and excellent tactics of Khān Bahādūr Diler Jang. For to wise men it is noteworthy that though His Late Majesty [Bahādūr Shāh], with four princes and so many nobles, determined to quell this rebellion, it proved fruitless. This time, the fire of this tumult was extinguished very easily, and that heretic with some thousands of his followers was captured, being ensnared in the web of his own deeds, and several thousand of his doomed followers were driven to death by starvation and thirst during the siege ... [Rewards to I'timāduddaula, Qamruddīn Khān and Zakariyā Khān]. The following weapons of the rebels\* were brought and deposited in the Fort by Zakariyā Khān: Swords, 1000; shields, 278; bows, 173; muskets, 180; *jamdhars* [daggers], 114;

knives, 217. Some gold ornaments, 23 [gold] *muhrs*, and six hundred and odd rupees in cash were also deposited in the Imperial Treasury.

Sar Barāh Khān, *Kotwāl*, had a hundred persons of this doomed sect beheaded everyday. By imperial orders he handed over seventeen of his [Banda's] functionaries to the *Mir Ātish* on the 27th [21 March 1716], taking them to the Fort of the Capital [Delhi]. He [the *Kotwāl*] suspended the corpses of the executed persons from trees around the city.

29th [Jumāda II, 20 June 1716]. Sar Barāh, the *Kotwāl*, and Ibrāhimuddīn Khān, the *Mir Ātish*, had the doomed rebel\* [Banda] executed with much torture along with his three-year old son, and twenty-six of his companions, in the proximity of the tomb of Khwāja Qutbuddīn, the saint; and thus the world was cleansed of the presence of that polluted one.

#### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> *Dāman-i Kohistān-i Dābar*. This expression suggests that *dābar* should not be taken as a word meaning low-lying floodland, but as a territorial name. However, *Dābar* does not appear on maps, and seems otherwise to be unknown as a name of the district north of *Sādhaura*.
- <sup>2</sup> *Bhūp Prakāsh* had been captured by Mughal forces raiding *Nāhan* in pursuit of *Banda Bahādur*. He was suspected of having let *Banda* flee through his territory. From the fact that he is designated "*zamīndār* of *Nāhan*", and, in the subsequent lines, his mother is mentioned as trying for his release, one must infer that his father *Harī Prakāsh* was by now dead.
- <sup>3</sup> *Irvine (Later Mughals*, 1, p.117) misunderstands this sentence. The thirty-odd men were not emissaries "sent by his mother to plead for his release", but Sikh prisoners sent by the mother to prove her sincerity in fighting *Banda*, in the hope that this would moderate the Emperor's wrath against her son and so secure his release.



## 13

# Banda Bahādur and his Followers

From Khāfi Khān, *Muntakhabu 'l Lubāb*

*Translated by Majida Bano*

The most-used Persian source for Banda Bahādur's rebellion so far has been Khāfi Khān's famous history of India, the *Muntakhabu 'l Lubāb*, completed in 1731. The work has been printed, having been edited by Kabiruddin Aḥmad and Ghulām Qādir, Bib. Ind., Calcutta, 1860-74, 2 vols. It was also translated practically *in extenso* (for the period 1659-1731) by John Dowson in H.M. Elliot and J. Dowson, *The History of India as told by its own Historians*, VII, pp.211-533. In the printed edition of the Persian text the account of the Sikhs is spread in Vol.II of Khāfi Khān's history over pp.651-61, 669-675, 761-67, corresponding to Dowson's translation, pp.413-420, 423-25, and 456-59.

There is no doubt that Khāfi Khān furnishes a fairly detailed account; but since we have even more detailed and earlier accounts like those of the *'Ibratnāmas* of Mirzā Muḥammad and Saiyid Muḥammad Qāsim and the very accurate and chronologically rigorous narrative in Hādī Kāmwar Khān's *Tazkiratu's Salāṭīn Chaghātā*, from all of which full accounts of the Sikhs have been extracted and translated above, a full translation of Khāfi Khān's account now appears redundant. Still, despite his loose chronology and not a few inaccuracies, Khāfi Khān does add to our information. But since Dowson's translation running to over a dozen pages is available in fairly accessible reprints, it has seemed best to restrict the

translation here to just two passages.

Passage I (printed text, pp.671-2) is taken from Khāfi Khān's account of Bahādur Shāh's assault on Banda's forces at Lohgarh (near Sadhaura). This passage, important for Khāfi Khān's appreciation of how the Sikhs fought (he is apparently the only Persian writer who records *Fateh Darshan* as the war-cry of Banda's followers), is badly represented in Dowson's translation, p.424, being abridged to barely four or five lines. A full rendering, therefore, seemed called for.

Passage II (printed text, pp.765-67) is Khāfi Khān's account of Banda and his fellow captives' entry into Delhi and their execution there in 1716. Here Dowson's translation (pp.457-9) is fairly full and accurate. Khāfi Khān qualifies himself as an eye-witness, and, for this reason, it has been thought that a fresh, independent version of this oft-quoted account of that memorable event, with its unflinching martyrs, may fittingly find a place in this volume.

## TRANSLATION

### I

Pp.671-2

[Mughal siege of Lohgarh, under Bahādur Shāh]

That wretched chief of that sect [Banda Bahādur], accompanied by his error-tending, doomed followers, whom wealth-seeking as well as deep faith had bound to that eternally misled one, incited and encouraged [his followers] to fight and resist with such fables and inducements as that whoever is killed in this battle will without delay in the very form, whether beardless or bearded, in which he dies\* would return and attain further progress in the stages of worldly' life. Those persons\* who regarded the statement of their spiritual leader and chief (*pīr o peshwā*) in the matter of transmigration of souls (which is condemned by all scripture-believing God-praying faiths) as absolutely proved, lent their ears in agreement. Coming out of the fort with all alacrity, enthusiasm and inclination, they raised the cry of "*Fat'h Darshan*", [and] "*Sachchā Bādshāh*,"<sup>2</sup> at the time of battle, and like insects threw themselves madly and bravely upon the fire of artillery and the edge of the sword and the tips of arrows and spears. They launched rank-shaking assaults on the imperial entrenchments, and every day many were killed. Some Muslims

also earned the eternal merit of martyrdom. Although from the lower castes of Hindus, countless people like ants and locusts had gathered round him [Banda] and lost no time in getting killed or coming into battle for his sake, yet, they did not harm such Hindus of high status as Khatrijs of the Punjāb, who were colluding in the plans and designs of that rebel\* [Banda] or the Jāts, famous for their bravery, who were supporting and joining the army of that doomed one. All remaining Hindus, along with the Muslims, they regarded as deserving to be killed. To observers of military conflicts it is apparent that in most armies, among two or three thousand horsemen, if there are one or two hundred horsemen, who are brave and loyal to the salt to the extent of sacrificing their lives, this becomes a cause for the honour and victory of that army. In contrast was this wretched sect, in which despite most of them being foot-soldiers, there was hardly anyone among them, either horse or foot, who did not consider being killed like sheep in the path of his spiritual leader (*murshid*) as his own greatest wish and aspiration. This reason and their greed for wealth, precious goods and jewels, which came into their hands through plunder, became a fresh factor for the success and triumph of those beggarly, doomed men.\* Ordinary people of little faith attributed it to magic and sorcery practised by that sect.

## II

Pp.765-67

After the [successful] endeavour of 'Abdu's Şamad Khān [in capturing Banda Bahādur] had been reported to the Emperor and commended by him, an imperial order was sent requiring that rebel to be despatched [to the court] along with the heads of those killed as well as the captives. 'Abdu-ş Şamad Khān [Governor of Lahore] sent off nearly two thousand straw-filled heads and one thousand persons chained in irons under the escort of his son Zakariyā Khān and Qamruddin Khān. In the middle of the Muharram of that year [about 9 January 1716]<sup>3</sup> when the captives and heads of that infamous sect arrived near the capital [Delhi], the Emperor ordered I'timādu'ddaula Muḥammad Amīn Khān, the [Imperial] Bakhshī, to go out of the city and bring to the city that rebel\* [Banda] and his companions, with wooden frames as their headgear and blackened faces, him [Banda] to be mounted on an elephant, others on camels, and the heads carried on spears, so that this might serve as a warning to spectators against oppressing people. After he entered the city and passed under the

Emperor's view, the Emperor ordered the chief of that crew of rebels [Banda] with his son and two or three trusted companions of his to be confined in the Fort. As for the others, he ordered that every day two hundred or three hundred persons of that evil sect be executed in front of the *chabūtra* [platform] of the *Kotwālī* [office of head of city police] and on the roads of the *bāzār*. From amongst the Khatri, [some] who regarded themselves in secret as the followers and disciples of that rebel,\* approached Muḥammad Amin Khān and other intermediaries of nobles with offers of large sums of money in return for that wicked man's life being spared, but this was not listened to. After the execution of all his followers was over, the Emperor ordered that, first, by his own hand his son should be killed with the same lack of mercy as that man\* had shown in killing the children of others; thereafter, limb after limb of his should be cut. This punishment, a suitable recompense for the misdeeds of that evildoer, should also be meted out to his companions. Indeed, who did something, for which he did not receive? Who sowed anything that he did not harvest! Couplet:

Do not be unaware of the consequences of your deeds.

From [sowing] wheat, comes wheat; from barley, comes barley.

What can one write of the [firm] belief that sect\* had in that ill-fated man\*? Many instances are reported, which reason hesitates to accept. But what this writer himself saw is now being recorded: During the executions of that group, the mother of one of them, who was a youth in fresh bloom, obtained some means and a patron, and made a complaint to the Emperor and Saiyid 'Abdullāh Khān [the *Wazīr*], pleading with humility and importunity that her son was actually one of the victims and prisoners of that heretic, having been made captive by them after his own property had been plundered: without any fault of his, he had now been made a prisoner as being one of that group, and, though innocent, was due to be executed. [The Emperor,] Muḥammad Farrukh Siyar took pity on that deceiving woman, and appointed a mace-bearer from the Court to secure her son's release. That artful woman reached her son with the order of his release when the executioner was standing over the head of that rebel with a blood-spilling sword. She gave [the executioner] the order of his release. Her son, however, cried out [to the executioner]: "My mother lies. I am, heart and soul, a life-sacrificing believer and devotee of my Guide (*murshid*) [*Gurū*].

Send me soon to join my companions [already killed].”

They say, I’timāduddaula Muḥammad Amīn Khān, at the time of their meeting, asked that doomed rebel\* now due to be killed, that is, the chief of that sect [Banda]: “Your present demeanour exhibits signs of wisdom and a sense of justice. How were you led to such ways that you did not consider the consequences of your deeds, and for a few (lit. four) days of this ill-destined life, committed such cruelties and odious deeds upon Hindus and Muslims?” He replied; “In all religions and communities, whenever disobedience and defiance [of God], in excess of all limits, begins to be displayed by man, the embodiment of rebellion, the True Avenger then appoints someone as cruel as I to impose penalty on man for his sins, so that he may become the means for affecting retribution on that community for its misdeeds. Couplet:

When He wants to make the world desolate;  
He entrusts the country to the hands of a cruel man.

Afterwards for the punishment of his [the retributor’s] own misdeeds, He bestows victory over him to a man of authority like you, so that he too obtains punishment for his deeds in this world, as we and you are now witnessing.”

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### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> In the text, *dīnavī* (religious): but I take it from the context that the author intended *dunyavī*: in Persian writing the two words are hard to distinguish.
- <sup>2</sup> *Fateh Darshan* was a cry said to have been adopted by Banda, and was rejected by Sikhs later on, since it signified “Victory to the Sect”, as if Sikhism was only a *darshana* or sect of Hinduism. *Sachchā Bādshāh* was a much earlier designation for God or the *Gurū*, meaning the True or Spiritual King.
- <sup>3</sup> This date is wrong by about two months; the event took place in March 1716.

## 14

### Banda Bahādur and his Followers

From Muḥammad Shafī' "Wārid", *Mir'āt-i Wāridāt*

*Translated by Irfan Habib*

Muḥammad Shafī' Wārid completed his work on 18 April 1734. As contained in British Library MS Add. 6579, the *Mir'āt-i Wāridāt* is a straightforward history of the Mughal dynasty.

In view of the fact that details of Banda Bahādur's invasion have already been furnished from earlier sources in this volume, the translation from Wārid's work is restricted to a few extracts on the social character of Banda Bahādur's rebellion. These passages occur in Wārid's chapter on the reign of Bahādur Shāh (1707-12), on folios 117a-118b of the Br. Lib. MS Add.6579.

#### TRANSLATION

Br. Lib., Add. 6579, ff.117a-118b

[Assassination of Gurū Gobind Singh at the hands of an Afghān at Nānder —] Owing to the occurrence of this sudden event, the leaders of his community (*khulafā'-i millat-ash*) consulted among themselves, and, after making satisfactory preparations, sent off to Hindūstān a conjurer who had great identity of appearance with that man\* [Gurū Gobind], on a mischievous [lit. fruitless, ignorant] errand. They sent letters to the *zamīndārs* of the territories of the Punjāb and Hindūstān, who belonged to his circle of believers, that Gurū Gobind, while in the army of the Emperor, had died\* at the hands of an Afghān, but, according to his will, in a short while, he will, through the

transmigration of his soul, wear the robe of honour of sovereignty, reappearing afresh as a living person. In this situation it is meet that every one should raise the banner of independence [from Mughal rule] and, recognizing obedience to him as the source of worldly wealth and the means of eternal salvation, not allow delay or reflection to occur in contributing money, goods and property. After the perusal of these letters every person in his village began to wait most anxiously for the coming of that cruel deceiver. Then, all of a sudden, he declared his presence in the township of Kharkhoda, four *farsakhs* [=kurohs] from the capital [Delhi]. Its *zamīndār*, who a few years earlier than this had gone to visit Gurū Gobind and had knowledge of his appearance and manners, dedicated himself wholeheartedly to the obedience of that conjurer, who had made himself similar in appearance to him. He carried the news of his coming to the Sikhs in all directions. "Sikh" is the title by which the believers and followers of that line [lit. family] are known since the time of Nānak.

....

[After the defeat and death of Wazīr Khān and the sack of Sahrind (Sirhind):] When Sahrind became the seat of that evil sect, they sent forces to the surrounding tracts and destroyed the families of those who had not bent their heads in obedience to them from older times. Whether Muslims or Hindus, everyone who was not enrolled among his followers was put to the sword by those cruel men.\* Since the cruelty of that man\* [Banda] has been mentioned by this truthful pen, it is meet that some lines be written about his habits and manners... After the slaying of Wazīr Khān, he laid down that of Hindus and Muslims, whoever became enrolled among his Sikhs, should be of one body and take their meal together so that the distinction in honour between the lowly and the well-born was entirely removed and all achieved mutual unison, acting together. A sweeper of spittle sat with a *rāja* of great status, and they felt no hostility to each other. He [Banda Bahādur] thus initiated numerous innovations and strange practices and put them into effect....

When the power of that chief, of that cruel and inequitable army reached its acme, with the Sikhs gathering around him from all parts of Hindūstān, Dakkhin, Bengāl, Kābul, Kashmir and other places — for no village or city is without this topsy-turvy sect, — he in a very short time completed the building of a stone fort of great strength at the foot of the Siwālik Hills near Shāhdaura [Sādhaura], of which he had laid the foundations. He

made that fort his seat, and sent his officials to administer every city and village far and near.

Strange it was how through God-decreed fate, the courage and bravery of the inhabitants of those places had departed. If a lowly sweeper or cobbler (*chamār*), more impure than whom there is no caste (*qaum*) in Hindūstān, went to attend on that rebel,\* he would be appointed to govern his own town and would return with an order (*sanad*) of office of government in his hand. The moment he stepped into the territory, or town, or village, all the gentry and notables went out to receive him, and after his alighting at his house, stood with folded hands before him. Since that man of low nature would have information about the real condition of all houses, what unprecedented impositions did they not inflict on the better-placed persons of that place and what cruelty did they not invent! No Hindu or Muslim could have the power to see, or hear of, such cruelty. He [the official sent by Banda] would demand whatever precious goods were in anyone's house and deposit it in the ill-destined treasury of the *Gurū*.\* No person could oppose his orders. Such is the power of Almighty that in the twinkling of an eye He can put such a lowly person in authority over a whole world of the high-born in such a manner that so many thousand of persons who had displayed bravery in so many manly contests, became helpless and lost even the courage to speak in front of that single man.



# Gurū Gobind Singh and his Family after his Death, to 1759-60

From Chaturman, *Chahār Gulshan*

*Translated by Irfan Habib*

Rāi Chaturman Saksena completed in 1759-60 a work entitled *Chahār Gulshan*, which is fairly well known among historians for the geographical information it provides. Less well known is the information given in its fourth part or *gulshan* about religious sects. The Sikhs or 'Nānak Panthīs' have the last section of this portion devoted to them. The author dates his work by a chronogram in the preface to A.H. 1173/A.D. 1759-60, and the account of the Sikhs is also brought down to that year. While there are obvious inaccuracies in Chaturman's account of the *Gurūs* before Gurū Gobind Singh, some of which are queried in the translation below, his account is important for the light it sheds on the history of Gurū Gobind Singh's family subsequent to his death, especially the spiritual claims of his adopted son Ajit Singh and the Gurū's two widows, whose history it carries down to 1759-60. The avoidance of any reference to Banda Bahādur may be noted. The traditional Sikh version of the history of Matā Sundarī, Ajit Singh and Hathī Singh would be found in Macauliffe, *Sikh Religion*, V, pp.254-57. Where a comparison has indicated any important points of difference between Chaturman's narrative and the Sikh accounts of this phase, these have been noticed in the foot-notes.

In this text the word *Gurū* is sometimes written as *Gorū* as well, but we have uniformly read *Gurū*.

The entire account is translated below mainly from the Habibganj MS 32/157, ff. 157a-159b, which has been compared with Jawāhar Museum MS Jim-fa-81, ff.84a-86a: both the MSS are in the Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh. Some stray notices of the Sikhs in the earlier portion of the *Chahār Gulshan*, Habibganj MS, ff40b, 53b, 141a, are given in Addendum.

## TRANSLATION

[From *Gulshan* IV:section on Hindu Sects] ff.157a-159b

Nānak Panthīs: The name<sup>1</sup> of [the founder of the line of] their leaders (*khulafā'*) is Nānak. He was a person of great goodness. His followers hold him to have been opposed to the Veda. The separate faith probably either derives from the path he established or is the innovation of his spiritual successors. In any case, it is necessary to give an account of the sect of Nānak in this short work. They [his followers] are in such large numbers that in every country and city they are to be counted in thousands. At some places, which is especially connected with them, lakhs of them assemble. Gurū Nānak was a Vaishnav, worshipping Rām (*bishnau Rām-asandī*). He was seized by a divine impulse, and God absorbed him in Himself. His disciples have a way of life and clothing different from others.

Gurū Nānak had his home at 12 *kurohs* from Lahore, where till today his descendants live. He himself was born in 888 AH [A.D.1483-4][in the reign of] Sultan Bahlol in the village of Talwandī Rāi Bhona in *pargana* Rāhūn[?], in the *ṣūba* of the Punjāb. His father Kālū was a *modī* [steward] in the establishment of King Bābur[!]. An account of his [Nānak's] perfections is beyond the compass of speech or writing. At ten years he attained powers of illumination and miracle. After travelling through many countries, he came to the township of Batāla. There he lived on the bank of river Rāvī, and gave guidance to large numbers of people, by his speech and preaching. A musician called Mardāna accompanied him. He [Nānak] captivated men's hearts by setting to rhyme verses in praise of His qualities, which are full of truths and contain intricate matters and subtleties. He took to giving [spiritual] instruction at the age of twenty and died in A.H. 1096 [*sic!* 956 AH= AD 1549-50?] during the time when Sher Shāh's son, Salīm Shāh ruled over Delhi. His late Majesty Emperor Bābur also met him. He gave spiritual guidance for fifty years and lived for seventy-three years.

Gurū Angad was the second *maḥal*. Belonging to the Sarīn [Tarhan(?), subcaste of the] Khatrī caste, he was one of the close companions of Gurū Nānak, who gave him the title of Gurū Angad. He nominated him his successor before his own death. Although Gurū Nānak had two sons, yet since they did not possess spiritual attainments, the status of successor and occupant of the spiritual seat was conferred on Gurū Angad. He ascended the seat in the reign of Humāyūn in A.H. 1096 [*sic!*]. He died during Akbar's reign, after conferring benefits on his disciples for thirteen years.

Gurū Amardās: He was a Bhalla Khatrī. Gurū Angad had no son. He put Amardās on his seat. He lived in Emperor Akbar's time and died in A.H. 994 [A.D. 1586]. His reign as spiritual guide lasted for twenty-four years.

Gurū Narā'indās [Rāmdās] became his successor. He was of the Sodhī Khatrī caste and the son-in-law of Gurū Amardās. He ascended to the spiritual seat in AH 994 in the reign of Emperor Akbar and died in AH 999 [AD 1590-91] in the reign of Emperor Jahāngīr [*sic!*]. The period of his reign as successor was seven years.

Gurū Arjan occupied the spiritual seat after his father. Both his period of reign and death took place in Jahāngīr's reign, [the death] in A.H. 1024 [A.D. 1615 — *sic!*]. The period of his spiritual reign: twenty-five years.

Gurū [Hargobind], Gurū Arjan's good son lent lustre to the spiritual seat during the reign of Emperor Jahāngīr and partly during the reign of Shāhjahān. In the latter reign he passed away. His spiritual reign lasted thirty-eight years.

Gurū Har Rāi. His father bore the name of Gurdittā, being the son of Gurū Hargobind, and dying in his father's lifetime. He succeeded to his grandfather's seat and died in the reign of 'Ālamgīr Aurangzeb in A.H. 1087 [A.D. 1676-77]. His spiritual reign lasted seventeen years.

Gurū [Har Kishan] occupied the spiritual seat in the said year. He died after a year, and is also known as Bālā Gurū.

Gurū Tegh Bahādur ascended the seat of spiritual succession in 1089 [AD 1678-79] in the reign of 'Ālamgīr. In the same reign, he was killed in Shahjahanabad [Delhi]. His period of spiritual reign was eleven years.

Gurū Gobind, the son of Tegh Bahādur, ascended the spiritual seat in the reign of 'Ālamgīr and died in 1122 A.H. [A.D. 1710-11] during the reign of Bahādur Shāh. He guided his disciples

for twenty-one years. An Afghān, whose father had been killed by Tegh Bahādur, came to him and became his companion. He played chess (*chaupār*) with him. One day Gurū Gobind told him. "A true son is one who takes revenge for his father." He [the Afghān] went on playing at that time. Again he [the Gurū] spoke some words to provoke his sense of self-respect. The Afghān was left with no option, and thrusting a dagger (*jhamdhar*) into the Gurū Gobind's stomach, killed him.<sup>2</sup>

Till Gurū Gobind, these ten persons were of the choice [successively continuing] of Gurū Nānak, and are regarded as eminently authoritative.

Gurū Ajit Singh sat on the spiritual seat in A.H.1123 [A.D. 1711-12] towards the end of Bahādur Shāh's reign. Since of the two sons of Gurū Gobind, one was killed near Sahrind, where he had fought a battle with Wazir Khān, the *faujdar* of that place, and the other was killed in [the *ṣūba* of ?] Ajmer, no sons survived him. The father's disciples, out of an anxiety not to let the family chain of succession break, recognized Ajit Singh to be his son, and took permission from the Imperial Court for his succession, and enthroned him on the spiritual seat.

When from childhood he reached the age of youth, some vain persons said he should have a separate establishment, and Matā Sundarī, who was the wife of Gurū Gobind, should expel him. Thus they created the basis for mutual quarrel. In the reign of the martyred emperor, Farrukh Siyar [1713-19], Matā Sundarī established a separate spiritual seat. Some Sikhs, deserting Ajit Singh, joined this seat.

Finally, by a dictate of fate, in the second [regnal] year of His Late Majesty Muḥammad Shāh, he [Ajit Singh] was unjustly killed on the false accusation that he had killed one of the Muslim dervishes.<sup>3</sup> Nearly two or three thousand [Muslim] mendicants and other persons collected together to raise a disturbance and went to Qamruddīn Khān I'timāduddaula, the Principal Vizier, making a noise and outcry in complaint [against Ajit Singh]. The said Vizier, fearful of tumult, sent his troops. He [Ajit Singh] was taken prisoner and brought alive to him. He lost his life upon being put under the feet of an elephant. This event took place in A.H. 1134 [A.D. 1721-22]. His period on the spiritual seat lasted fourteen years.

Hathi Singh, son of Ajit Singh, was then a very small child. His well-wishers, out of fear and anxiety that someone might harm him, took him to Mathura. Till today, which is A.H.1173

[A.D.1759-60], he still lives there, and many are attached to him, while some Nānakshāhīs have turned away from him.

**Matā Sundarī:** She was a wife of Gurū Gobind. They say she also served him [or, kept him company]. From the time she quarrelled with Ajit Singh, she established a separate spiritual seat, and people were drawn towards her. When she died, people turned to Sahib Devī.

**Śāhib Devī,** known as Kunwāra Dola ['Virgin Bride']. They say, she is the daughter of one of the hill Rājas. He had sent his daughter for [marriage to] Gurū Gobind. Gurū Gobind died before her arrival.<sup>4</sup> Thereafter she did not agree to marry anyone and lived in Delhi. After Matā Sundarī's death she succeeded to her spiritual seat. After one year, she too died.<sup>5</sup>

These two were in Delhi. Now all the Sikhs have no place of pilgrimage [lit. place of prayer] except for [that of] Hathī Singh, the son of Ajit Singh. He lives in Mathura with a goodly following, with a hundred or two hundred persons.

#### **Addendum**

##### **Miscellaneous Notices**

f.40b

[Province of Delhi]

Nānak Matā. A place near Sambhal, where the followers of Gurū Nānak assemble in large numbers on fixed days.

[Province of Lahore]

f.53b

Chak Gurū Nānak. In the neighbourhood of Ashtpūrī, Gurū Gobind [?Arjan], the fifth successor and occupant of the seat of Gurū Nānak, laid out a pleasant garden and tank there. Large numbers of people collect there on Baisākhi day, and, having spent two nights there, go two or three *kurohs* away to Rām Tirath, which is an ancient place of worship.

[Routes]

f.141a

[Places on the Delhi-Bareilly route, listed in order as one proceeds from Delhi] ..... Hāpur; Kālī Nī river, the bridge over which has been built by Dargāhī, a *faqīr* [mendicant] of Gurū Nānak;<sup>6</sup> Baksar; Ath Śānī, adjacent to which is Choiya Nāla, on which too Dargāhī has built a bridge; Garh Muktesar; Ganga river....

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Notes

- <sup>1</sup> *Āsāmī*: it may be recalled that the Gurūs who succeeded Nānak, in their verses also called themselves Nānak.
- <sup>2</sup> According to a Sikh tradition (Macauliffe, *Sikh Religion*, V, p.241), the killer was a grandson of Pa'inda *Khān*, who had been killed by Gurū Hargobind.
- <sup>3</sup> According to the traditional Sikh version, as recorded in Macauliffe, *Sikh Religion*, V, p.255, there was some truth in the accusation.
- <sup>4</sup> The Sikh tradition is that Šāhib Devī was a daughter of a Sikh of Rohtas, and was married by the Gurū after he had given up family life (Macauliffe, *Sikh Religion*, V, pp.143-4).
- <sup>5</sup> According to Sikh tradition (Macauliffe, V, 254) Sahib Devī "died of grief very soon after her husband", and thus long predeceased Matā Sundarī, who died in 1747 (*ibid.*, pp.256-7).
- <sup>6</sup> This remark is omitted in Habibganj MS by a slip of the scribe; see, however, Jawāhar Mus. MS, f.72a.

## 16

### Re-emergence of Sikh Power in the Punjab, 1748-65

From Ṭahmās Khān, *Qiṣṣa-i Ṭahmās-i Miskīn* or *Ṭahmās Nāma*

*Translated by Irfan Habib*

In April 1782 Ṭahmās Khān completed his memoirs which he had begun in 1780. His had been a colourful career. Born in eastern Turkey, c. 1740, of parents whose names and race he no longer remembered, he was captured by Nādir Shāh's Uzbek soldiery when he was only five years' old. His relatively pleasant life for two years in an Uzbek captain's household was shattered by the events following upon Nādir Shāh's murder in 1747. Passed from hand to hand, he was ultimately presented as a Turkish boy-slave to the Tūrānī noble Mu'īnu'l Mulk, who had arrived in Lahore in 1748 as the Mughal Governor of the Panjab. He received the name Timūr from his new master, which was changed to Ṭahmās Khān during the government of the Afghan prince Timūr Shāh at Lahore, 1757-59. Ṭahmās remained in the establishment of Mu'īnu'l Mulk's widow, Mughlānī Begam (usually styled Begam Ṣāhib by Ṭahmās in his memoirs) after Mu'īnu'l Mulk's death (1753), receiving from her much favour, including manumission and offices of trust, but also much ill-treatment from suspicion or caprice. He left her in 1761, when, as he says, his very life was in danger at her hands. Since Mughlānī Begam's political ambitions revolved around the Panjāb, and she stayed mainly at Lahore, withdrawing only in 1758-9 to Jammu, Ṭahmās memoirs give us first-hand glimpses of the re-emergence

of Sikh power in the 1750's. After leaving Jammu, Ṭahmās took service with the Afghān commander Zain Khān at Sirhind, and was present at the battle near Malner Kotla (mod. Maler Kotla), 1762, where Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī caused much slaughter among the Sikhs. But Ṭahmās was quick to predict a revival of Sikh power, a prediction that, as he records with some self-satisfaction, soon came true. The rest of his political career was spent in Delhi and its neighbourhood. There is a short passage on Aḥmad Shāh's invasion of 1765, but thereafter the author's references to Sikhs become fewer and mainly relate to the Doab and Haryana.

Ṭahmās does not give dates for any of the events he describes, except for the dates of births of two of his sons (where there are slips in regard to the years) and of the death of Najaf Khān (correctly given). He makes up for this, however, by rigorously following the true sequence of events, so that his narrative can be set in a tight chronological framework by reference to dates of events as given in other sources. For these, I have used Jadunath Sarkār, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, 4 Vols., Orient Longman reprints, Hyderabad, 1991 &c., and Ganda Singh, *Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī*, Bombay, 1959.

In translating extracts from Ṭahmās's memoirs I have primarily used the two Aligarh MSS, which are fragmentary, but between them offer a complete text of the work. Of these, Habibganj F32/119 is probably the author's own copy, since it has an autograph of his on the front page, explaining his names and titles. Subḥānullāh F.920/44 contains the latter portion omitted in the first MS. The matter in the middle is found in both MSS. I have compared the text of the MSS with the text edited by Muḥammad Aslam. Lahore, 1986, which is mainly based on the British Museum (now British Library) MS Oriental 1918. (Thanks are owed to Professor Muẓaffar Alam, who kindly let me use his copy of this edition). The variants, wherever significant, are noted in the translation below. So far as possible, I have tried to retain in the translation the conversational tone of the original.

I have not checked my renderings with P.S. Madhava Rao's professedly abridged translation, *Tahmasnama*, Bombay, 1967.



**TRANSLATION**

**[A. Expeditions Against The Sikhs During The Governorship of Mu'inu'l Mulk, 1748-53]**

Ed., pp.80-82

Habibganj MS, f55a-56b

Account of the making of *Jazā'irs* [Long Muskets] in *Nawāb* Mu'inu'l Mulk Bahādur's Establishment.

... In a little amount of time, nine hundred *jazā'ir*-shooting horsemen, together with *jazā'irs* usable in battle, were got ready, and [the *Nawāb*, Mu'inu'l Mulk] sent them off to chastise the Sikhs. They rode fast twenty *kurohs* at a time,<sup>1</sup> in pursuit of those perdition-bound ones, and they extinguished the fire of their mischief and contention, wherever they encountered it, by the blood-thirsty flame-throwing sharp "water" [of the sword] of that country, and sent them to hell. He [Mu'inu'l Mulk] gave to anyone who brought the cut-off heads of Sikhs, Rupees ten for each such head; to him who brought a [captured] horse, he gave that very horse; and if the mount of any horseman happened to be lost in battle, he was granted a horse from the stable of His Highness' own establishment.

Ed., pp.94-95

Habibganj MS, ff.64b-65a

Account of *Nawāb* Mu'inu'l Mulk's Establishing Administration in the Province of Lahore

.... His Highness the *Nawāb*, after having in every way established a firm administration in the city of Lahore, came out to restore order in the country of the Panjab, which had undergone a small revolution on account of the tumult caused by Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī [1751-52].

Owing to the occurrence of these events the *Nawāb*'s soldiery, on account either of confusion or of loss of heart, had scattered, and had fled to Sirhind or even Shāhjahānābād [Delhi]. Now, they came back daily to attend on him, bashful and ashamed....

Afterwards, the *Nawāb*, aiming to control the country and manage the affairs of that district, took his camp in the direction of Baṭāla. The news arrived that a large number of Sikhs had raised disturbance in that territory, plundering the population and obstructing the passage of travellers. Accordingly, he sent Saiyid Jamīluddīn *Khān* and the *Bakhshī Ghāzi Beg Khān*, with some other captains, to chastise and expel that misguided sect.

The said Khān made an attack on a body of the Sikhs, and pressed that sect\* so hard that, unable to oppose the victorious army, they took to their heels. Nine hundred of the Sikh infantry, going into the fort of Rām Raunī, which is adjacent to *Chak* Gurū [Amritsar], were besieged there. Finally, the Sikhs wielding swords came out; from every side Saiyid Jamīluddīn Khān and his troops, dismounting, took to battle with hand arms (*kotah yarāq*), and cut down the Sikhs like fodder by their sharp swords and sent them to hell. Thereafter, in a few days, the Nawāb too marched upon that *Chak*,<sup>2</sup> and it remained the site of encampment of the victorious army for many days.

Ed., pp.97-98

Habibganj MS, ff.67b-68a

Account of the Rebellion of Manṣūr ‘Alī Khān Ṣafdar Jang Against the King of India and the Battle with Ghāziuddīn Khān, acting on Behalf of the King [September 1753]

[When these events were taking place:] After some days he [*Nawāb* Mu‘inu’l Mulk] came out of Lahore, and, proceeding to a distance of seven *kurohs*, set up his camp (*dera*) near the village of Tilakpūr,<sup>3</sup> which is situated on the bank of the Lahore river [the Ravi], and stayed there for a long time. When news of any tumult raised by the Sikhs came from any quarter, he sent Khoja [Khawāja] Mirzā, along with Mughal troops, to chastise and extirpate the Sikhs. Khoja Mirzā with his own contingent traversed distances of twenty, even thirty *kurohs*, to places where he had information of the Sikhs, and encountered and attacked them. Such persons as cut off the heads of some Sikhs, or took their horses, or captured [the Sikhs] themselves and brought them alive, received rewards. A Mughal, who lost his horse in the fray, received in lieu of it a better horse from the [*Nawāb*’s] establishment (*sarkār*). Sikhs who arrived alive as captives, were put under the nail-press (*mekh-chū*),<sup>4</sup> and sent to hell. From time to time Ādina Beg Khān sent from the district of [Jalandhar] Doab, forty or fifty Sikh prisoners, and they too were executed by crushing them under the nail-press.

[B. The Sikhs and a Coup-Plotter, 1757]

Ed., Pp.107-110

Habibganj MS, ff.72b, 76a-b

Account of the Governorship in the name of Muḥammad

## Rise of Sikh Power

Amin Khān, [minor] son of the late Nawāb Mu'īnu'l Mulk.

Account of the grant of *Faujdārī* of Patti to Qāsim Khān

....

[The increase of influence of the eunuchs in the government carried on by Mu'īnu'l Mulk's widow, Mughlāni Begam or Begam Ṣāhib, alienated the author and led him and to join the ambitious captain, Qāsim Khān, who had been appointed *faujdār* (commandant) of Patti by the Begam.] Helpless, owing to my lack of access in the [Begam's] court, we agreed to join him. He, that very time, made an application seeking the grant of permission to leave [the Begam's quarters] and, marching off from there, encamped at the garden of Lakhpat Rāi, two *kurohs* distant. The next day, I too, girding my loins, firm in resolution, rode to that garden, in order to join him in both good and evil days.... Thus early in the morning by agreement, [Qāsim Khān and his men] marched off ahead. By chance, there was a skirmish with the Sikhs that very day. People were insistent that first we should overcome the Sikhs\* so that with God's aid we should fulfil the requirement of bravery, and put these ill-mannered ones to the sword and destroy them to the very seed and root. But Qāsim Khān did not agree to this, and at evening time he returned to his tents; and the Sikhs came in pursuit, fighting, close to the encampment, and then, turning around, went back. When that night was over, they [Qāsim Khān and his men] turned away from the road to Patti and went to a Mughal village, twelve *kurohs* away, called Damumudun and struck camp there. The headmen and people of that place who came to attend upon him, — he made all of them captive and kept them confined. He seized the fort and the village and had them surrounded, saying they are in league with the Sikhs. In short for one month, his camp remained there, and none, including women and children, who had been made prisoners, could obtain release.

Every day the Sikhs made assaults twice and each time after a fight went off. After some days, Qāsim Khān appointed a brother of his, called 'Ālam Beg Khān, to lead a raiding party (*chapāwal*) of one thousand horse and foot, against the chief village of the Sikhs where they had collected. Immediately, upon his arrival there, the Sikhs collected together and opposed him in battle. After some attacking and killing, the engagement became hot. 'Ālam Beg Khān did not find enough strength in him to stay firm, and lost the resolve to fight; so he turned back. Those three hundred

Badakhshī infantry [who had initially formed the core of his retainers] gave proof of their bravery and self-sacrifice and became martyrs. When this news reached the army, Qāsim Khān mounted horse, and I also accompanied him. With two horsemen, I went up to two *kurohs*,<sup>5</sup> and joined the raiding force, which had gone ahead earlier. I saw people in flight coming towards me. My brothers, Muḥammad ‘Aqil,<sup>6</sup> etc., who had gone with the raiding party, — at last, I found them safe and sound. I went further ahead. What, then do I see? That three Sikh horsemen are coming after that [fleeing] army; behind them is the Sikh leader (*nāyāk*) of that group.<sup>7</sup> I put my horse to gallop: I found [bodies of] several people who, having been martyred, had fallen. But Muḥammad ‘Aqil, by extreme persuasion, pulled me back, and I safely reached the army [camp] that day.

The next day, in the answers and questions stemming from the counsel that I gave to Qāsim Khān, harsh words were exchanged between us. He did not listen. After my conversation with Qāsim Khān, in which I spoke to him both of good and ill, I mounted and rode on to Lahore. After some days, without attaining his aim, and with much [lit. a thousand] humiliation and loss, he marched out from there, and arriving at a distance of five *kurohs* from Lahore, encamped on the bank of the river [Ravi]. I went to see him. He said, “I have made twenty thousand Sikhs my allies and friends, through my good treatment of them. Soon I will bring Lahore under my possession. Indeed, recruiting a large army I will also capture Shāhjahānābād [Delhi] and become King”... After five days, he marched off from there and encamped on the edge of the city near [the tomb of] Shāh Balāwal. I again went to see him. There was no state left in him. He had given away thousands of rupees while giving guns, bows, equipment and material *gratis* to the Sikhs; but nothing came of it. And people of his own army besieged him, demanding their pay, and spoke harshly to him....

[C. Sikhs and the First Afghan Administration, 1757-58]  
Ed., Pp.179-81

Subhānullāh MS, f.26a-27a

Account of the *Wazīr* Jahān Khān's battle with the Sikhs at Chak Gurū [Amritsar] [1757].<sup>8</sup>

The writer of events so recorded that one day it reached the *Wazīr* Jahān Khān's ear from reports of informants that an army of Sikhs, containing a large multitude, had assembled for bathing<sup>9</sup> at *Chak* Gurū and is raising disturbance and rebellion.

The [Afghan] King's forces together with Hājī 'Aṭā Khān and others, were engaged in bringing under control and administering another area and were attending to them [the Sikhs] [there]. The said *wazīr* sent a letter to *sardār* Hājī 'Aṭā Khān, informing him of the circumstances of this disturbance, further writing to him as follows: "On such-and-such day, you should, with the whole army, making forced marches, reach the said *chāk* [rect. *chak*];<sup>10</sup> and from this side, I would mount and reach there the same day. God willing, after we join, that misguided sect would be sent to hell". In the city of Lahore it was proclaimed, according to the custom of the Wilāyat [Afghanistan], that anyone who has got a horse, whether a servant [of government] or not, should come and, preparing himself for battle, accompany the expedition. Thus to Begam Šāhib [Mu'īnu'l Mulk's widow] also he [Jahān Khān] sent word that the same day [lit. every day] she should send her contingent along with Ṭahmās Khān [the author]. Begam Šāhib immediately summoned all [her] horsemen, who assembling totalled twenty-five horse, and asked them to accompany this humble self (*Miskīn*);<sup>11</sup> Qāsim Khān too was in it. In short, we went and joined the *Wazīr*'s army. All in all, this army must have numbered nearly two thousand horse. From there he [Jahān Khān] proceeded to Sarāi Khān Khānān, which was at a distance of six *kurohs* from Lahore; it was then evening. The next day, riding out from that place, he marched to a place which was two *kurohs* from the said *Chak*. He stood there astonished, wondering why Hājī 'Aṭā Khān, despite the binding instructions, had not yet arrived there. The Sikhs receiving the alarm, sallied forth from all the four directions and joined battle. From both sides there was no let-up in the fire of war. The Sikhs, gathering in mass, surrounded the government army (*lashkar-i sarkār*) and kept the engagement hot from all sides, to such an extent that many of the army getting frightened, chose the path of flight. The *Wazīr*, from bravery and courage, moved forward, and at that time only this humble self (*Miskīn*), with two horsemen, remained with him. By chance, the Sikhs did not make way for the fleeing troops. The latter had no option but to turn back ashamed and repentant,<sup>12</sup> and rejoin their army. Jahān Khān, then and there, drew his sword from the scabbard and inflicted injury on some of the persons who had taken to flight from his army, demanding, "Why did you take to flight?" In any case, all collecting together again, took to fighting once more. Still, the position became very difficult and none remained [on the field]. But at that time from this humble self (*Miskīn*) such

effort and courage was displayed that if I write about it, none will believe it. Ultimately, in that situation, *Ḥājī* ‘*Aṭā*’ *Khān* arrived, along with the royal army; and putting to merciless sword, or targetting with lightning-like muskets, the ill-mannered Sikhs, who pretended to some sense of pride and bravery, he inflicted a defeat on them. Those doomed ones, not being able to withstand the attack, took to flight. The victorious army closely pursued them to *Chak* Gurū. The *Wazīr* stood at a spot there. Five Sikhs on foot were seen standing at the gate of the *Chak*. The [Afghan] troops made a sally and killed them. Mīr Ni‘mat *Khān*, one of the notables of Lahore, attained martyrdom at that place. The camp of the victorious army was established there. The *Wazīr* lavished thousands of words of praise and encouragement upon this humble self (*Miskīn*). Thereafter, when the *Wazīr*, in order to gain control of the country and establish his administration, marched off from there, I remained with him for three days. Then, I was given leave to return to Lahore.

Ed., pp.181-84

Subḥānullāh MS. ff.26a-28b

Account of the Maladministration of [Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī’s son,] Timūr Shāh [1757-58]

... During those days two Afghan horsemen, while coming from Sirhind were by chance murdered in the vicinity of a fort called Sodh Rāmdās.<sup>13</sup> When this news reached the *wazīr* Jahān *Khān*, he immediately, according to the custom of the Wilāyat [Afghanistan], set some horsemen as *sazāwals* [officers commissioned to enforce particular orders] upon the *chaudhurī* [of the place]. This *chaudhurī* was in those territories not only a leading man (*sardār*) of some note but also enjoyed repute and credit as a spiritual guide of the Sikhs,<sup>14</sup> and dealt in matters of lakhs [of rupees]; yet the *sazāwals*, proceeding according to the practice of the Wilāyat, inflicted such cruelty and harshness on that helpless victim that he feared for his life and, abandoning that place, retired to some [secret] spot, hiding himself from the *sazāwals*.<sup>15</sup> The *sazāwals* returned from that place, disappointed and empty-handed. From that moment the shape of administration,<sup>16</sup> which in that country had been [so far] in good order, was disrupted, and from every side tumult and rebellion began to be raised by the Sikhs. Wherever the [Afghan] army went, it came back defeated, till things came to such a pass that the environs of the city of Lahore were affected. Every night in bodies

of a thousand, the Sikhs attacked the city and sacked the quarters outside the city-wall. No one came out of the city to disperse or stop them. Indeed, the order was issued that on the passage of the first watch (*pās*) of the night, the gates of the city should be closed.<sup>17</sup> In sum, matters led to a great loss of repute [of the government], and the administration of the country was thrown into disorder.

**[D. Sikh Insurrection near Sialkot, 1760]**

Ed., pp.230, 235-41

Subḥānullāh MS., ff.53a, 54a-57a

Account of my Appointment as Administrator (*Hākīm*)  
in the *Jāgīr* of Sialkot [on Behalf of Mughlānī Begam]  
[1760]

I took control over that *jāgīr* in the last phase of the Rabī' season at a time when two or three months remained before the onset of the rains. But they had harvested and removed the wheat crop. Every village in that district was so prone to violence and refractoriness that they would fight against bodies of ten thousand Sikhs. I had employed in all one hundred and fifty horsemen, and collected revenue due to my good treatment [of them]. Giving a reduction of twenty thousand<sup>18</sup> Rupees from the *jāma* ' [assessed revenue], I started my work...

From Shāhjahānābād [Delhi] the news arrived that a Maratha [commander], Bhāu by name, had come to Shāhjahānābād [July 1760] with three or four lakh horse and foot to oppose Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī in battle. Begam Ṣāhib left the Shāh's army and arrived [back] at Jammu...<sup>19</sup>

During this time, that commandant of the Four *Maḥals* [Sialkot, Aurangabad, Gujrat and Parsrur], [Rustam Khān Bangash, appointed by Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī], came out of the city [Sialkot] with one hundred and fifty horse and foot, in all, to fight with the Sikhs. Hearing the news, I too mounted after mid-day<sup>20</sup> and racing my horse for two *kurohs*, joined him and asked him: "Where are you riding to with such haste?"<sup>21</sup> He replied, "In a village, which is nine<sup>22</sup> *kurohs* distant by road from here, fifty Sikhs are engaged in a fight, and the *zamīndārs* have informed me of it. For this reason, I am going there in order to chastise them." To cut the story short, I went along with him. We had gone for six *kurohs* [when we found] that nearly four thousand Sikhs had laid siege to that village. The time they saw our army from a distance they turned away from the village and rushed upon us from all sides.

All of us went into a ruined fort which stood in that vicinity; and the battle began. From late afternoon to midnight, they encircled the village and pressed us hard. O Miskin, stop this narrative here and begin another one tomorrow.

Account of our capture at the hands of the Sikhs

Whatever was seen is now related. That night was passed in a thousand worries and much exertion. As the dawn broke and the sun illumined the world, I saw that from all the four sides the Sikhs and *zamīndārs*, troop after troop, were rushing onwards and making the battle hard upon our army. They were also saying with a loud voice: "Give us Rustam *Khān*, commandant of the Four *Mahals*!" Though for three or four *gharīs* [one *gharī* = 24 minutes], from this side too musket-fire was discharged, our lead [and] gunpowder began to run out. We [at last] became helpless. Encouraged, the Sikhs advanced to the foot of the said *garhī* [small fort]. In this situation, there was nothing for us to do but to throw down from the top of that fort, mud-balls, stones, sling-stones,<sup>23</sup> clay-pots and wood, whatever came to hand, and so till mid-day we prevented them from becoming bolder and coming up to us. In the end, the Sikhs climbed up the towers and began to break down the walls. When this happened, Rustam *Khān* and I, with six other persons, tucked up our skirts and, raising our swords, came out of the gate. By accident, my foot slipped near the gate and I fell down. The Sikhs made a sally then and there and seized me. Advancing some steps further, they also seized Rustam *Khān*. One of my brothers,<sup>24</sup> *Ilāh Wardī Beg*, who was accompanying us, was martyred. By that time all the Sikhs and *zamīndārs* who had assembled there, numbered nearly twenty thousand. Taking us from there they took us to the village where they had begun the fighting and alighted there. When the night came they demanded one lakh of Rupees from me. Till midnight, the questions and answers, the contention and disputation, continued, till the amount was settled at six hundred. "Tomorrow", [their leader said,] "we will take you to that village. From there you should write to Jammu, so that they [your employers] may agree to [pay] that amount. I will set you at liberty from that place and have you taken safe and sound to Jammu." So, early in the morning, they sent me with two or three Sikhs to their village, and nearly a hundred Sikhs also went in that direction. For two or three *kurohs* they took me mounted on horse; thereafter they made me walk on foot; thus I walked eight *kurohs* on foot. For this reason, my feet ached and I felt unable to walk further. But marks of the city of Pasrūr could [now] be seen, two



or three *kurohs* away. At that time one of those Sikhs, mounted on a horse, called the name of his *Gurū*, praying: “*O Gurū*, whoever at the [right] time<sup>25</sup> pronounces your name, need never despair or be disappointed in any work”. From hearing this, I was brought to tears, and I recalled God to myself, and said: “*O my patron saint, Ghaus-i Šamadānī* [the Eternal Helper, ‘Abdu’l Qādir Jilānī], beloved of God, I am one of the humblest of your disciples. Do help me now and give me release from the hands of the Sikhs”. I was engaged in these prayers, when suddenly a fort, standing upon the route, came to view. The *zamīndār* of that place, with forty-five musketeers (*barqandāz*), came out, put those Sikhs to rout, and whatever, plundered material and effects they were taking with them, all of it he seized. He also released us and brought us into the fort. As the time of the evening prayer that Sikh who had captured us and was having us conveyed,<sup>26</sup> sent [to the *zamīndār*] from there [his headquarters] the following messages: “You have released and taken away that Mughal from our custody. The chief of the Sikhs had fixed a ransom of Rupees six thousand on him. Now, it would be your responsibility [to pay it].” On hearing this message, the *zamīndār* brought us into the fort and kept us in a tower. And that Rustam *Khān*, who had been captured and a lakh of rupees fixed as ransom on him, he was [asked] to go to the fort of Sialkot, to pay it.

Within two or three days forty thousand Sikhs, collecting together, marched on Sialkot. Since the fort of that place was very strong and on top of a high mound, the *Dīwān* of Rustam *Khān* got ready to give battle. The battle went on for three days. He [the *Dīwān*] wrote a letter to *Khwāja Mirzā Khān*, who had also got some *maḥals* near Sialkot which he had got on *ijara* (farm) from Buland *Khān* Sadozī [Aḥmad Shāh’s governor at Lahore] and was engaged in his own business. But on receipt of the *Dīwān*’s letter — to the effect that “if you come to my aid and assistance this time, I will pay you two thousand rupees daily till the resolution [of this affair], and your Highness will gain in repute as well” — upon reading the *Dīwān*’s letter, despite the fact that Sialkot was fifteen *kurohs* away, he immediately started off, marching five *kurohs* in the direction of Sialkot. Upon hearing this news, the Sikhs put the city to plunder and sack, and retiring five *kurohs* away, hid themselves in the cloak of contrition.<sup>27</sup> In two marches, the said *Nawāb* arrived beneath [the fort of] Sialkot, and the Sikhs, retiring a further five *kurohs*, and having failed, dispersed themselves in the plains. To that *zamīndār*, who had got

me released, and then brought me, they sent a message [about the money?]. In short, the said *zamīndār* took from me a written agreement to pay two hundred rupees; but he was not aware of my circumstances. He thought I too was a trooper. Thus we remained ten days in that fort and became very desperate and helpless. I prayed, "Saiyid 'Ābid,<sup>28</sup> by the grace of God, do get me released." Around mid-day, when in this meditation, I went to sleep. I dreamt that an old man, white-haired in a green cloak, wakes me up with his wooden stick,<sup>29</sup> [saying,] "Get up, give something and go away from here." That very moment, I woke up. That *zamīndār* came to me to say, "Pay the two hundred rupees of the demand-money, and I will take you to Sialkot". So in one night I got the sum, and the next night he took me to Sialkot. Two days later I went to see Begam Šāhib [at Jammu] ... [The author was there dismissed and imprisoned for his pains]. [Later,] mounted, Begam Šāhib was brought [by his rival and successor] to Sialkot... Those days, the Commandant (*Hākīm*), Rustam *Khān*, administrator of the Four *Maḥals*, gave twenty-two thousand Rupees to the Sikhs through the *Rāja* of Jammu and obtained his release. He had come to the City [of Sialkot] and spoke much to Begam Šāhib [in my praise]....

### [E. Sikh Power in the Punjab, 1761-62]

Account of the Author's Journey to Sirhind in Search of Service

[After the author's flight from Begam Šāhib, who had imprisoned him near Jammu, he undertook a journey with some horsemen to Sirhind] .... In short, that day at Shāhpūr, the next under [lit. facing] the hills of Nūrpūr, the next in the mountains of Juālāmukhī, which is a place of pilgrimage of the Hindus, then, to Nādaun, that is, through mountain after mountain and cave after cave, traversing hill-tops and in some places going on foot, with much distress and confusion, the reason being<sup>30</sup> that all over the [plain] country the Sikhs were roaming and going around. Before this time, Nawāb Mirzā *Khān*, with one thousand horse and foot, attained martyrdom at the hands of forty thousand Sikhs whom he had fought with. Also, *Khawāja* 'Abd *Khān*,<sup>31</sup> who was the Governor of Lahore, came out some journey-stages to chastise Charhat Singh.<sup>32</sup> He laid siege to his village; and the besieged became very helpless and desperate. By chance throughout the army of Nawāb *Khawāja* 'Abd *Khān* there were groups of Sikhs who were in his employ. Another ten thousand<sup>33</sup> Sikhs had been summoned from

the [Jalandhar] Doab. One night, they conspired with the Sikhs of the [Nawāb's] army, so that early next morning all the Sikhs of the army and the village, uniting and joining together, defeated and dispersed Nawāb 'Abd Khān's army. That 'Abd Khān, accompanied by some men, fled to Lahore. Besides this, Sa'adat Khān and Ṣādiq Khān, Afrīdī Afghans, who were appointed [by Aḥmad Shāh] as commandants of the [Jalandhar] Doab: them too the Sikhs defeated, throwing them out, like flies out of milk. In short, from the Attock River [Indus] to the river of Sirhind the Sikhs have acquired dominance and possession. From this cause, people travelled by the mountain routes. In sixteen days we reached Sirhind.

Ed., pp.254-57

Subḥānullāh MS, ff.64a-65b

Account of Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī's Arrival and Campaign against the Sikhs [February 1762]

... Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī reached Lahore and some battles occurred with the Sikhs. But refraining from a confrontation with the Shāh's army, the Sikhs tended to disperse. But nearly one and a half lakh Sikhs, horse and foot, came towards Sirhind in the Roji [?] country, and began to raise disturbance there. *Sardār* Zain Khān [commandant of Sirhind and the author's current employer], with ten to fifteen thousand horse and foot, had encamped at Mālner [Māler] Kotla. The Sikhs too had arrived at a place seven *kurohs* distant from it, and had set up camp there. One night, the Shāh's horsemen arrived and gave the news that "Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī has crossed both the rivers [Beas and Sutlej] of the [Jalandhar] Doab and would fall upon the Sikhs tomorrow. You too should early morning tomorrow get mounted and attack the Sikhs." In accordance with this order, *Sardār* Zain Khān early in the morning went fast after the Sikhs. Since they too had got the news, they also marched up. He [Zain Khān] posted Qāsim Khān ahead for the battle. When all of us [in Qāsim Khān's contingent] reached in front of the Sikhs, they took to flight. We pursued them, striking at them, for half a *kurohs*, till those Sikh horsemen, turning back from the direction of Durrānī, came towards us. Not able to withstand them, Qāsim Khān ran away. Although I told him not to do so, he did not agree. Taking all his men with him, he fled towards Mālner Kotla, where he had set up camp. I alone went towards Chat.<sup>34</sup> In this while, the fleeing Sikhs too disappeared from sight. I reached and joined Murtaẓā Khān Bharech, who was a servant

of Zain Khān, and was standing separately with five hundred horse and foot, collected together on a mound. That moment, the King's army arrived and encircled Murtaẓā Khān, thinking that these are a body of the Sikhs. By chance, among these people, I was wearing the *kulāh* (conical cap): leaving [Zain Khān's] army I joined the King's people. I explained all the circumstances. It happened that Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī was satisfied with my explanation. Reaching that place, his spies too conveyed to him the real position.<sup>35</sup> So he summoned him [Murtaẓā Khān] to his presence. Since he was acquainted with him before, he conferred upon him a shawl (*doshāla*), and told him, "The *Wazīr* Shāh Walī Khān, along with Zain Khān, are moving forward, fighting with a large number of Sikhs. You should also proceed swiftly to participate with them [in the fighting]". Since the said Khān, moved slowly and leisurely according to the custom of Hindustān, I went past him and, making my horse gallop, traversed ten *kurohs* of the way. I then saw that the *Wazīr*, Shāh Walī Khān, and Zain Khān are moving together, with four thousand horsemen accompanying them, and four thousand other horsemen, mostly distant-arrow shooters (*yak-tīr andāz*), taking along Sikhs as captives on their march. At that time Zain Khān asked me, "Where is Qāsim Khān?" I replied: "He had rushed in with a drawn sword, along with his own men, upon those Sikh foot-soldiers."<sup>36</sup> I have no knowledge of what happened thereafter." The Sikh foot-soldiers, coming out [of the battle] were trying to flee, sometimes by running, sometimes by tarrying, reciting the *kalima* [short Muslim formula of faith] or seeking quarter. The Shāh's army came from behind killing and moving close-ranked (? *chaspān*). In short, that day they reached the fort of Barnala, [in possession] of Āla Jat. During this time, it is probable that about twenty-five thousand Sikhs were slain...

I return to an account of the Shāh. Through Najib Khān's intercession, Āla Jat presented himself before the Shāh. He presented an offering (*nazarāna*), and obtained his release. Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī now turned his reins towards Lahore...

**[F. Resurgence of Sikh Power, 1762-65]**

Ed., pp.258-60

Subḥānullāh MS, ff.65b-66b

Account of my Journey to Bring my Family from Jammu, and the Birth of my son Sa'adat Khan<sup>37</sup> [1762]

... Now, by the grace of God the Benevolent, the routes in all the four directions became open and the obstructions set by

robbers and the risks posed by thieves were removed: Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī established himself at the city of Lahore. I told Dārāb Beg and Faizullāh Beg:<sup>38</sup> "Let one of you go and within twenty-five days bring people of [our] family from Jammu. Otherwise, so my reason<sup>39</sup> tells me, within a month all these routes will be closed once again, and disorders will arise in that country." They replied: "This task can be done only within two months by us." Ultimately, since they did not agree to it, I myself out of anger, started [from Sirhind].... Within four days I reached the city of Lahore. There I learnt that the inmates of the zenana, departing from Jammu have arrived at Sialkot... [The author reached Sialkot late one day and early next morning started back with his family]....

In short, in four days [from Sialkot] I reached the city of Lahore. After a stay of three days there, I started from there and travelled two [daily] stages from Lahore. [There were two dangers:] First, the terror of the Sikhs increased day by day. Second, [from] the army of the Shāh which was devastating and depopulating Lahore by plundering and sacking it from all sides. But through the grace of God, Who ever guards His slaves, we came out safe from those dangers. On the third day, I reached the [Jalandhar] Doāb. There, for once, a little of the face of peace was seen...

Within some days we arrived at Sirhind. In twenty-four days, this problem [of bringing my family] was solved. Through God's will, Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī during those very days left for Qandahār [summer, 1762], and in the entire country in his possession maladministration and disorder arose. People now gave credit to my prediction that after twenty-five days disturbance and disorder would again break out.... In any case, within one month of our arrival at Sirhind, I had the good fortune of having a son born, whom I gave the name of Sa'ādat Yār Khān.<sup>40</sup>

[Sikh Attack on Zain Khān and the Trans-Yamuna Doab, 1763-64]

Ed., pp.274

Subhānullāh MS, ff.72b-73a

.... Also in those days [when Sūraj Mal, the Jat ruler, had been killed in battle with Najīb Khān, December 1763], news arrived that the Sikhs gathering together had martyred Zain Khān [the Afghan commandant] in battle in Sirhind and had plundered his army. They also sacked the city of Sirhind and made it entirely desolate. At that time Qāsim Khān and Murtazā Khān Bharech, becoming aggrieved, had left Zain Khān's army some days before

the battle with the Sikhs, and, with their effects and baggage, had passed Kunjpura. The Sikhs, after ravaging the city of Sirhind, crossed [the Yamuna] at the Būriya *ghāt*, and marched towards Sahāranpūr, Shāmlī and Khāndla, with the aim of extortion (*ikhraj*). However, from fear of the coming of [Najīb Khān's] Rohila armies, the Sikhs abandoned that territory and went back to their own seats... From that year onwards, every year the Sikhs crossed the Yamuna to plunder the territory of Najīb Khān, and from this side too the *Nawāb* [Najīb Khān] marched out with his troops to chastise them, and time and again battles were fought.

....

Ed., pp.279-80

Subhānullāh MS, ff.74b-75b

Account of my going to the presence of *Nawāb Zābiṭa Khān* [1765]

Now, I shall relate the turn of fortune that occurred when three years after the incidents related in the previous chapter, Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī marched from Kābul to chastise the Sikhs and arrived near Thanesar. The Yamuna river is fourteen *kurohs* distant by road from there, and *Nawāb* Najīb Khān had encamped in the rear of that river. Aḥmad Shāh sent men to summon him to his presence, and taking him with him returned towards Sirhind. Making a military campaign against the Sikhs as their main object, he [the Shāh] busied himself in endeavouring to chastise and root out the Sikhs.\* The army of the vanguard proceeded two day's or three days' marches ahead. The Sikhs, not being able to resist the Shāh's army, fled like crows and kites out of terror of the intrepid falcons [i.e., the Shāh's troops]. The Shāh's army had reached up to the Doāb; the Sikhs fleeing from there and crossing the Yamuna river, then fordable, sacked the city of Meerut, which was in the possession of *Nawāb* Najīb Khān. The Shāh, frustrated by their wily [lit. 'fox-like'] tactics, stayed where he was, and from there sent off ten thousand brave and veteran horsemen under *Sardār* Jahāndār Khān along with *nawab* Zābiṭa Khān to chastise the Sikhs. The said *sardār* reached the town of Shāmlī by forced marches. The Sikhs came to confront them, but, unable to give battle, fled away. That day perhaps nearly nine thousand men from amongst the Sikhs had their heads cut off. At that time Zābiṭa Khān had assigned me scouting duties. When after the victory over the Sikhs and their dispersal, *Nawāb* Zābiṭa Khān and *Sardār* Jahān Khān were sitting together, I too went there and offered salutations. The

*Sardār* spoke of what of my soldierly activity and endeavours he had himself witnessed in the war with the Sikhs in the time of Timūr Shāh [as viceroy of the Punjāb], and praised me excessively. Whereupon *Nawāb Zābiṭa Khān*, hearing this from the lips of *Sardār Jahān Khān*, was much pleased, and his favourable inclination towards me increased a hundred times. About that time Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī, retired from Lāhore and went back to Kābul. I took leave for a few days and returned home...

# Notes

- <sup>1</sup> In the Habibganj MS and in the ed. *bist ḥasht*, or twenty-eight; but *hasht* is often written for *bist* and vice versa; *bist*, *bist* ('twenty, twenty', i.e. twenty each time) seems a better reading.
- <sup>2</sup> Not *jang* as in the ed. and in MS.
- <sup>3</sup> The editor says Malikpur is the correct name of this locality.
- <sup>4</sup> I do not find *mekh-chū* in Steingass, and 'nail press', *mekh* meaning nail, is a conjectural meaning given to it.
- <sup>5</sup> At this point a gap in the Habibganj MS, on account of one leaf being lost, ends and the text is resumed.
- <sup>6</sup> 'Muḥammad Qulī' in the edited text.
- <sup>7</sup> I have followed the MS and not the edited text here.
- <sup>8</sup> In 1757 Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī's son, Timūr Shāh, was appointed by him to govern the province of Lahore, with Jahān Khān as his *Wazīr*, or chief minister.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ghusl*. But '*amal* (revenue collection) in Subḥānullāh (Aligarh) MS.
- <sup>10</sup> *Chāk* also in the ed.
- <sup>11</sup> A difference of opinion exists (cf. Ganda Singh, *Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī*, p.419) as to whether the author had adopted the pen-name of Miskīn, or whether the word is used in its literal meaning, showing humility in references to oneself (cf. *banda*, *fidwī*, used in the same way). But the text shows that the author makes a double use of the word, both as pen-name and as standing for the first person. The matter is settled by his own note on the front page of the Habibganj MS, where he says that after receiving his other names and titles, he adopted the pen-name (*takhalluṣ*) of Miskīn, while dictating (*guftan*) the book, for God does not accord His approval to anyone who is not humble (*miskīn*).
- <sup>12</sup> So in the ed. Subḥānullāh MS: 'defeated' for 'repentant'.
- <sup>13</sup> So in Subḥānullāh MS. The ed. reads 'Bodh' for Sodh; Ganda Singh has Kot Buddha Rāmdās (*Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī*, p.193).
- <sup>14</sup> I reconstruct the text in the Subḥānullāh MS to read: *ba-murshid-i Sikhān*.... The ed. reads: *murshid-i Sikhān*...
- <sup>15</sup> Another incident of this time described in other sources is that of the Afghan attack on Kartarpur, whose custodian was Sodhī Vadbhag Singh (Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, I (1469-1765), Bombay, 1950, p.154). It is possible that this incident is the same as the one being described here. In that case the *chaudhurī*, who was also a *murshid* of the Sikhs, could well be the Sodhī priest, a descendant of Dhīr Mal, grandson of Gurū Hargobind, whose

successors (the Sodhīs) have claimed to be “owners” of Kartarpur and have been custodians of the original manuscript of the Granth compiled by Gurū Arjan (W.H. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, Delhi, 1975, p.62).

- <sup>16</sup> Ed. reads *aman* (peace) for *ā'in* (administration, regulation) in the Subhānullāh MS.
- <sup>17</sup> *Muqaffal* in the ed. doubtless represents the intended sense. But Subhānullāh MS has *maqhūr*; Br. Mus. MS (as noted by ed.), *ma'mūr*.
- <sup>18</sup> So in Subhānullāh MS. The ed. reads 'eight thousand'.
- <sup>19</sup> Subhānullāh MS. reads Jamhū for Jammū throughout.
- <sup>20</sup> I take *dahar/zuhar* to be a spelling mistake for *zuhar*. Ed. has *der* (delay), which does not suit the context.
- <sup>21</sup> I read '*inān rez* for '*inān ṣabr* in the ed.
- <sup>22</sup> *Sih* (three) in the ed., & Subhānullāh MS, but in view of distances subsequently given, the word is to be read *nuh*, nine. *Sih* and *nuh* are often confounded in writing.
- <sup>23</sup> So in Subhānullāh MS, omitted in the ed.
- <sup>24</sup> By 'brothers', here, he means fellow-slaves or servants of Mughlānī Begam.
- <sup>25</sup> So in Subhānullāh MS: *bagāh*. Ed. reads *pagāh*, morning.
- <sup>26</sup> Some words are omitted here in the Subhānullāh MS.
- <sup>27</sup> Thus Subhānullāh MS, which reads *nidāmat*. Ed. reads: *mudāwamat*, perseverance.
- <sup>28</sup> Sayyid 'Ābid was a *ṣūfī* of the *silṣila* of Shaiḫ 'Abdu'l Qādir Jilānī (Qhaṣṣu'l A'ṣam) and admitted Ṭahmās as his *murīd* or disciple in 1758-59 (ed., pp.178-9).
- <sup>29</sup> Both in the Subhānullāh MS and in the edition, the words appear slightly corrupt here.
- <sup>30</sup> I follow Subhānullāh MS here. The ed. reads *gasht* for *ba-sabab*.
- <sup>31</sup> So Subhānullāh MS. The ed. has 'Ubaid *Khān* throughout.
- <sup>32</sup> So in the ed. Subhānullāh MS: Charat Sind.
- <sup>33</sup> So in Subhānullāh MS. Ed.: one thousand.
- <sup>34</sup> So Subhānullāh MS. Ed.: Chhat.
- <sup>35</sup> So Subhānullāh MS. Ed.: 'thousand truths' (!)
- <sup>36</sup> So in the ed.: *piyādah*. Subhānullāh MS: *aḍḍahā*, plural of Hindi *aḍḍa*, base, post.
- <sup>37</sup> So in Subhānullāh MS. The ed. has no reference to the son's birth in the heading.
- <sup>38</sup> Dārāb Beg was a "brother" of the author (being an officer of Mughlānī Begam); Faizullāh Beg was a "son" of his by adoption. Both had come with him from Jammu to Sirhind and had left their families behind at Jammu.
- <sup>39</sup> So in the ed. Subhānullāh MS: 'pen'.
- <sup>40</sup> The Subhānullāh MS on margin gives the date of birth as 17 Zīqa'd 1171 (also in words), i.e. 23 July 1758, which is impossible. Probably, the day and month are right, while the year is wrong: 17 Zīqa'd 1175 would correspond to 9 June 1762, and this would suit the course of events very well.



## Re-emergence of Sikh Power in the Punjab

News Reports from Delhi, 1759-65

*Translated by Irfan Habib*

The noted historian and archivist of Maharashtra, G.H. Khare obtained from different sources what are news-reports from Delhi that were sent either to the Peshwā or to some other notable of the Maratha Confederacy. He published their texts in a volume entitled *Persian Sources of Indian History*, Vol.V, Part I, Poona, 1961, pp.1-121. In this collection the earlier reports deal with events at Delhi only and belong to the 3rd regnal year of 'Ālamgīr II (A.D. 1757). Another series of reports begins with 8 Jumāda II, R.Y. 2 'Ālamgīr II (10 March 1756) (from p.15 onwards in Khare's volume). These appear to have been sent at regular intervals (once or twice monthly), but only some have made it to Khare's collection. The last report is dated 17 Ramazān 1178 (10 March 1765). It is possible that the last few reports in Khare's collection (pp.112-21) were not sent to a Maratha notable, but to the Nizām, since they were preserved in the Central Records Office, Hyderabad. Their style is, however, the same as that of the earlier reports.

These reports are not only contemporary, but seem fairly creditworthy, though they tend naturally to cover only political events. For Sikh history — in respect of which they do not appear to have been much used — they are especially important, since they cover a crucial period of the emergence of Sikh power in the Punjab and the contest with Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī, 1659-65. These not

only help us to date certain events better, but also add other significant information not known to us from any other source. The major defeat inflicted by the Sikhs on Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī himself in February 1764, in a battle on the left bank of the Chenāb river, which forced him to retire in haste into Afghanistan, does not seem otherwise to be known. It is not mentioned in Ganda Singh's detailed work, *Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī, the Father of Modern Afghanistan*, Bombay, 1959. This is, of course, due to the fact that these reports had not been published when he wrote his book.

A translation is offered below of the major passages in these reports relevant to Sikh history. Unfortunately, the large gaps in the reports do not enable one to read a connected story here, though some times a letter covers the ground of a previous report by summarizing its contents in the initial portion.

'Gorū' in these reports has been transliterated as 'Gurū' throughout in this translation.

### TRANSLATION

*Date lost: Post-26 Jumāda II, R.Y. 2 [28 March, 1756]*  
P.26

As for Ādīna Beg Khān, *faujdār* of the [Jālandhar] Doab, [the plan] between [him and] Rāja Nagarmal is that should the Nawāb ['Imādu'l Mulk, the *Wazīr*, then at Sirhind] cross the river Sutlej and march towards Lahore, while the Khān [Ādīna Beg] is well aware of the affairs at Lahore, they would wait for the Nawāb to cross the said [Sutlej] river, when the seditious sect of Sikhs, etc., who have good relations with the Khān, would make attacks and raids on the [Nawab's] army to make it impossible for him to reach Lahore.

*3 Rajab, R.Y. 5 [2 March 1759]*  
Pp.39-40

The real situation of *śūba* Lahore is this that the sect of Sikhs of the *Gurū* [are] the authors of much tumult there, since they do not abstain from pillaging and plundering, so much so that out of fear from that sect the gates of the city wall [of Lahore] are kept closed, and, as a result, grain, etc., cannot reach the city. The country around is also absolutely ruined. For this reason, grain prices are very high: sometimes five seers are to be had for a rupee, sometimes the rate is seven seers.<sup>1</sup> The few inhabitants who remain there are in a condition of starvation.

.... Mīr Ḥasan 'Alī Khān, successor of the late Ādīna Beg Khān, ... has sent a deputy of his to Lahore, and promised that no one should inflict cruelty and oppression on its inhabitants. Negotiations are also being pursued with the chiefs of the Sikhs to ensure that they rejoin service, as previously, and abandon the practice of plunder. It is to be seen whether they can abstain from their custom or not.

*Undated: Prob.1 Rabī' I 1174 R.Y. [11 October 1760]*  
P.57

The situation in the area of *ṣūba* Lahore is as follows: In the said city, the sect of Sikhs has established their control, and have proclaimed the authority of Bhāu Ṣāḥib [the Maratha commander]. They have organized the *karāhī Gurū Ṣāḥib* [distribution of sacred sweetmeat made of flour], and have held a prayer (*ardās*)<sup>2</sup> for Bhāu Ṣāḥib, that is, a prayer to<sup>3</sup> the Gurū Ṣāḥib for His Excellency's victory and triumph. They raised their hands towards the sky, praying that the tyrant [Aḥmad Shāh] Abdālī should soon get the punishment for his misdeeds and shortly meet his death. The said sect has brought under its control the territories of that *ṣūba* as well as the area of the [Jālandhar] Doāb, etc., so that having established their tax collection over the country, they share it with the Shāh. This is being submitted for report to His Excellency [the Peshwā?].

Alā Singh Jāt stays in his own principality [Patiala]. He has summoned a body of Sikhs and written to Bhāu Ṣāḥib to say: "His Excellency may please come here himself. I will soon join him with the troops of the Sikhs. Backed by His Excellency's (*Srī Jīu*'s) prestige, I will not leave the Abdālīs alive." The body of the Sikhs in the environs of Lahore, etc., probably numbers forty or fifty thousand horse.

*Undated: Post-Shawwāl 1174 [May June 1761]*  
Pp.59-60

The news has been received that Shāh Abdālī, marching from Gujarāt Shāh Daula<sup>4</sup> has crossed the Chenāb and is on his way to *Wilāyat* [Afghanistan], for he has now only to cross the Attock river [Indus] .... It is heard that he has appointed Muḥammad [Sar-]Buland Khān... as Provincial Governor of Lahore. Since the tumult of the Sikh sect in that *ṣūba* is very considerable, it does not seem that administration can now be restored. Indeed, the Abdālī oppressors' pillage and plunder of the country has reduced it to dust and ruin. Let Almighty God

soon so punish the cruel for their deeds that no name or sign should survive of them!

The situation in the [Jālandhar] Doāb is that Sa'ādat Khān Āfridī, appointed *faujdār* of the Doāb by Abdālī, resides at Jālandhar, the headquarters. The Sikhs, out of fear of the Abdālī army, had hidden and concealed themselves in the hills and valleys. Now that the news has spread that the Shāh has gone beyond Lahore, troop after troop of them, coming down from the hills, have laid siege to the said *faujdār* and are busy collecting tax of the rabi harvest from these territories. The said Khān has no power to fight or contend with them. Report made for submission to His Excellency.

2 Ramazān 1176 [17 March 1763]

P.67

The position of Zain Khān, *faujdār*, *chakla* of Sirhind, is that the said Khān was at Ambala, on this [eastern] side of the *chakla*; now he has marched and entered Sirhind. The news is that a force of Sikhs is making a raid upon him; any way, a body of them having assembled has reached the district of Rūpar. Within some days, after the return of the Sikh chiefs [and their joining this force], their control will extend to Karnāl. At present, there is no body of men who can obstruct or check them. Whatever will happen next will be reported.

30 Ramazān 1176 [14 April 1763]

Pp.73-76

Previous to this, a report has already been sent of the happenings at the Capital Shāhjahānābād [Delhi]; of Shāh Abdālī's crossing over the Attock river [Indus] on 27 Sha'bān 1176 [13 March 1763] and his marching thence and reaching the town of Peshawar; ... of the humiliation suffered [by Shāh Abdālī] at the hands of the body of Sikh chiefs; of their taking possession of the *maḥals* of Siālkot and Gujarāt Shāh Daulā, etc., up to the Jhelum river; of the messages [to the Shāh] from Zain Khān, *faujdār* of *chakla* Sirhind and Rāja Ghamandā Singh, *faujdār* of [Jālandhar] Doab, who has retired to his home in the hills, leaving his officials behind, out of the fear from and dominance of the Sikhs, [the message being] in respect of the payment of the promised tax-money, which they have been paying according to agreement to the Shāh when residing in their *ta'alluqas*;<sup>5</sup> of the arrival of Jassā Singh, Ṭhokā Singh,<sup>6</sup> and other chiefs of that sect at the Amritsar tank in Chak Gurū for the purpose of the bath (*ashnān*) in the

month of Baisākhī [April-May], that is Sankrant Megh; after their mutual deliberation and consultation, their division and distribution of the country among themselves and departure for districts and tracts around; of the presence of Kābulī Mal, the Shāh's *ḍīwān* and *Khawāja* 'Ubaid *Khān* within [the capital of] *ṣūba* Lahore, and their negotiations with the Sikhs..... A report of these matters was sent to His Excellency's headquarters on 14 Ramazān 1076 [30 March 1763] by a paid messenger, and it is hoped that it has been seen.

Thereafter, the news of Shāh Abdālī is that he is encamped in the town of Peshāwar and plans to go to Kābul and Qandahār .... [His difficulties described].

The situation of the Sikh chiefs is that they are encamped at the site of the tank at Chak Gurū; and tribe (*khail*) after tribe of theirs, in large numbers have gathered there, so that the moment they are free from [the ceremonies of] *ashnān* of Baisākhī, the raid into the territories around Sahāranpūr and other districts is to be undertaken. No one dares or has the power to oppose that sect. The Calamity of Abdālī (*āfat-i Abdālī*) has gone; but now the Calamity of the Sikhs (*āfat-i Sikhān*) has arisen.

The said [Sikh] chiefs have written to Their Excellencies Shujā'uddaula and Najibuddaula to say: "We, servants of the [Mughal] court, by its desire, have expelled Shāh Abdālī from *ṣūba* Lahore, so that he has left, crossing the Attock river [Indus]. As a result, we have incurred large expenditure in gathering troops. The amount that Rīzā Qulī *Khān* had before leaving, fixed, for being sent to the Shāh, may be paid to us so that we may pay it to the army chiefs. In case of delay, the [conduct of the] Sikh forces would not be in our hands; and they would make a raid on the capital [Delhi]. We should not be held to blame for this." From this the inhabitants of these territories are again in a state of turmoil.

As to Zain *Khān*, *faujdār* of *chakla* Sirhind, he marched from Sirhind towards the *Koṭṭahs* [Settlements] of 'Īsā *Khān* in Lakhī Jungle. Apparently, Ālā Singh told him: "These Sikh chiefs are not within my control; whatever you wish to do, you may do." The said *Khān*, therefore, returned to Ambāla, two journey-stages this side of *chakla* Sirhind, engaging himself in tax-collection to provide for his troops. Zain *Khān* has nearly five thousand horsemen and nearly five thousand infantry. But the *Khān* has spasms of fever on hearing the name of the Sikhs. Before the event [the Sikh attack] even takes place, he has removed himself from

Sirhind. When the Sikh raid on Sirhind takes place, the Khān's plan is to flee to the capital [Delhi].

28 Zi'l-hijja 1176 [9 July 1763]

Pp.86-88

Since the last letter, the news of Shāh Abdālī is that he has been staying for some time in *ṣūba* Kābul... Just as the rumour of Shāh Abdālī's coming spread in the capital [Delhi] for less than a few days and then ran cold, so too in Peshāwar and Kābul the rumour of the Sikh troops' being about to reach those places spreads among the select as well as the common people of those places. For this reason Shāh Abdālī has sent forth his *bakhshī* and commander, Jahān Khān, with a small force and let it out that he [Jahān Khān] has been appointed Governor of Lahore to quell the Sikhs, and is on his way. So Jahān Khān has begun his march from Kābul... The need to recover [the lost territory in] Iran weighs on the Shāh's heart, and the need to deal with the Sikhs gnaws at his soul. Whatever is fated to happen will take place after the rainy season.

As for the Sikhs, these days Jassā Singh and others have marched out of their places in the [Jālandhar] Doab and have gone for *Gurmatā*, or consultation and deliberation, at the place of Chak Gurū at Amritsar.<sup>7</sup> Gūjar Singh, Lehnā Singh, etc., were encamped in the Mānjha tract, and Charat Singh, etc., on the other side of River Jhelum. The news is that all chiefs will come to the said place [Chak Gurū] to hold mutual consultation, and whatever is decided after mutual consultation will be acted upon.

Charan Gangūrlī, an envoy of Nawāb Shujā'uddaula [of Awadh] left the capital Shāhjahanābād [Delhi] and reached the camp of Jassā Singh in the [Jālandhar] Doāb, presenting him with robes of honour, the Emperor's [Shāh 'Ālam's] orders, and letters of Nawāb Shujā'uddaula. He replied: "We are going for consultation to the place of Chak Gurū. We will tell of the imperial orders to all the [Sikh] chiefs, and act according to the elevated orders."

...[Zain Khān, *faujdār* of *chakla* Sirhind binds himself to pay Rs 3 lakhs annually to Jassā Singh, through the mediation of Ālā Singh Jāt.] A force of Ālā Singh has joined Zain Khān, being posted with him for tax collection and assessment. As a result, the said Khān is occupying himself with the administration of those *maḥals* and has represented to the Shāh [Abdālī] that a settlement has been made with the Sikh chiefs owing to the exigencies of the situation, saying: "The moment the [Shāh's]

armies cross over to this side of the Attock river [Indus], I will present myself to cope with this sect."

*20 Muḥarram 1177 [2 August 1763]*

Pp.88-90

Before this report, the news had been conveyed of the proceedings of the Court; of the events at the capital Shāhjahānābād [Delhi]; of Shāh Abdālī's march from the province of Kābul to Qandahār; of his summoning back Jahān Khān; of the latter's march from Jalālābād to Kābul, by the Shāh's order; of the arrival of the chiefs of the sect of Sikhs, viz., Jassā Singh, Ṭhokā Singh, Gūjar Singh, Lehnā Singh, etc., to the place Chak Gurū for mutual deliberation and consultation; of the [spread of the] control of the said chiefs in the [Jālandhar] Doāb, Siālкот, etc., up to this side of the Attock River [Indus].... by the report of 28 Zī'lḥijja 1176 [9 July 1763],<sup>8</sup> which was sent by paid messengers, and must have been seen by His Excellency.

The situation with regard to the Sikh chiefs is as follows: Charat Singh, reacting to news of the impending coming of Jahān Khān, marched out of Siālкот and reached the vicinity of Rohtāsgarh. The chiefs who had assembled at Chak Gurū for deliberation and consultation, receiving this news, left the place to assist Charat Singh, [all] joining together. The said chiefs' forces have marched up to Rāwalpindī on this side of the Attock river [Indus], so that they have spread about and encamped in that entire district. The Sikhs' control is also established over the [Sindh sāgar] Doab; and in the *ta'alluqa* of the *zamīndārī* of the late Sulṭān Muqarrab Khān Ghakkar too their authority has been imposed. Their plan is that in case Shāh Abdālī arrives at Peshāwar to march on Lahore, they would betake themselves to the Attock River to give him battle.

*3 Rabī' II 1177 [11 October 1763]*

Pp.96-97

The facts about Jahān Khān are that, having by force and torture extorted the sum of Rupees three lakhs from the inhabitants of the city of Peshāwar, and having distributed a small amount of it among his troops, he has marched to the bank of the Attock river [Indus]. Since the Sikh army, which had spread around and encamped in that territory, has moved from there for the *ashnān* [bath] of Dussehra as well as Kātiki which takes place at the tank situated in Chak Gurū, and assembled on the river Jhelum for its *shamboḥ* (?), so Jahān Khān, accompanied by the son of

the deceased Abdu's Şamad Khān, Afzal Khān and other colleagues of his, crossed over to this side of the Attock river and encamped at Hasan Abdāl, 15 *kurohs* on this side of the said river. His force does not exceed seven or eight thousand horse.

Long life to Your Excellency: Jahān Khān cannot march forward from Hasan Abdāl to the Jhelum river to meet the Sikhs. He is waiting for the Shāh's arrival. Without the support of the Shāh, it does not appear possible for him to march on Lahore or fight the Sikhs....

As for the Sikhs, Charat Singh and other chiefs with a force of three or four thousand horse and foot are encamped on the river Jhelum. Although, the intention of all the chiefs was that for the *ashnān* of the month of Kātiki [October-November], they should go to the tank of Chak Gurū, yet on receiving the news of Jahān Khān's crossing the Attock river and encamping at Hasan Abdāl, they stationed themselves at the said river [Jhelum] and are preparing for a battle with the said Khān.

Jassā Singh, staying at the headquarters of the *faujdārī* of [Jālandhar] Doāb, is busy with tax-collection in that district. One force has raised disturbance in the neighbourhood of the *şūba* [-capital] Lahore and does not allow grain to enter the city. As a result, grain is selling at eight seers [per rupee] in the city. It is cheap outside the city; but the people of the city are dying [of starvation].

At this time a very large crowd assembled for the festival of the Kātiki month at the place of Chak Gurū, and people are still coming. For this reason, after the construction of houses, previously begun, preparations have started for building other houses. The conical-hat (*kulāh*) wearing Durrānīs [Afghāns?] are working there as wage-labourers.

Zain Khān, *faujdār* of *chakla* Sirhind, has stationed himself within the *chakla*, and is there busy in administering and tax-collecting, with the collaboration and support of Ālā Singh Jāt. Gharmū [Gharmū?] Jāt, by name, belonging to the Sikh sect, has sacked and plundered some villages of Shāhdhōra [Sādhaura] and plans to sack the *maḥal* of Būriya as well.

News has been received that Ālā Singh Jāt and also Zain Khān have sent letters to Jahān Khān, the *Bakhshī* of the Shāh, that "if he [the Shāh] was to come to Lahore, we would in that case secure the removal of the Sikhs' *thānas* in the [Jālandhar] Doāb." As a result of this, ill-feeling has developed between the Sikhs and Ālā Singh.



29 Sha'bān 1177 [3 March 1764]

Pp.101-3

Previous to this, the news of the proceedings of the Imperial Court; of the happenings at the capital city [Delhi], ... of the crossing over to this side of the Attock river [Indus] by Shāh Abdālī on 9 Rajab 1177 [13 January 1764]; of the gathering of the Sikh chiefs, Charat Singh, Thokā Singh [Jassā Singh Thokā], etc., with large forces and artillery at Siālkot and other *maḥals* of Gujarāt Shāh Daula, Parastrūr, Sodhra, etc.; the crossing over to this side of the Sutlej river by Jassā Singh and others of that sect, and their laying siege to Sirhind; of the fight put up for some days by the deputy of Zain Khān, *faujdar* of that *chakla* appointed by the Shāh; of the sacking and plundering of this town thereafter; of Zain Khān's march from Ambāla to meet the Sikhs, after the receipt of this news; of his reaching within six *kurohs* of the town of Sirhind; of the attack upon him by Jassā Singh Kalāl, etc., the occurrence of a heavy battle, the plunder and destruction of Zain Khān, with ten thousand horsemen of his being killed; of the siege of Sirhind by the Sikhs, after the plunder and killing of Zain Khān; of their sacking and capturing it and seizing the money and goods of the said Khān, amounting to nearly fourteen or fifteen lakhs of rupees; ... and other facts, has been conveyed to you by the report sent by paid messengers; and the report must have been put up before Your Excellency.

The facts about Shāh Abdālī are as follows: After crossing the Attock river, he has stayed for some time at Ḥasan Abdāl, fifteen *kurohs* on this side of the river. He then moved, along with Shāh Walī Khān, Shāh Pasand Khān, Jahān Khān, etc., his commanders, to Rāwalpindī. In the meanwhile the Sikhs marched from Gujarāt Shāh Daulā, this side of the river Jhelum, to Chak Gurū, which is the place of pilgrimage of that sect, and is eleven *kurohs* from Lahore. They met at that place and after consulting each other decided that since in the neighbourhood of Lahore there are strong forts in all places, and the country is also theirs, and grain and fodder is abundant, they should let the Shāh come in and not encounter him until after he crosses the Chenāb river, when he should be met and fought with.

After the retreat of the Sikhs and their retiring to Chak Gurū, Shāh Abdālī reached the fort of Rohtāsgarh and left his men there. Then he crossed over to this side of river Jhelum and has encamped at Gujarāt Shāh Daulā and Parastrūr. The Shāh's forces have spread out and encamped on that side of the Chenāb

river. The Sikh chiefs, setting their forces in two or three divisions, have moved from Chak Gurū and reached the said [Chenab] river. Their plan seems to be that just when the Shāh crosses over to this side of the river, they should give him battle. Thus between them at the moment the said river intervenes. The Shāh has nearly forty thousand horse under him, and the Sikhs have more than one lakh horse and foot, with many well-mounted horsemen.<sup>9</sup>

2 Shawwāl 1177 [4 April 1764]

Pp.103-6

Before this report, news has been conveyed of the proceedings of the Imperial Court; of the happenings at the capital city of Shāhjahānābād [Delhi]; of the arrival of Shāh Abdālī upon the Chenāb river after crossing the Jhelum river; of the crossing over to this side of the Chenāb river at a ford, first by his vanguard (*chapāvalī*) troops, then by his own troops; of the ensuing battle with the Sikh chiefs, Charat Singh, Hari Singh, Ṭhokā Singh [Jassā Singh Ṭhokā], etc.; of the defeat and overthrow suffered by the Shāh's troops, after much slaughter and fighting and large numbers from both sides getting killed and wounded; of the drowning of many through missing the ford; of the Shāh's putting his own horse into the river, and the doubt whether he drowned or reached safety; of the pursuit by the said army [Sikhs] and the sacking of the [Shāh's] camp; ... of Jassā Singh, the head of the tribe (*sar-i khail*) of the Sikhs in the town of Sirhind, along with his companions, after the sacking of the *maḥals* of Sahili and Jhanja (?) inside Antar-Bed [Ganga-Yamuna Doāb], [and] after crossing over to this [western] side of the Yamuna river, reaching Ambāla and collecting tax on account of *Karāh Gurū*<sup>10</sup> from Dalil Khān, *zamīndār* of Kunjpūra, etc., and the sacking of many vilages of that district, .... by the report dated last day of Sha'bān 1177 [3 March 1764],<sup>11</sup> sent by paid messengers to the headquarters, which must have been seen by Your Excellency.

As for the facts regarding Shāh Abdālī, after the great battle and the defeat suffered by him there at the hands of the Sikhs, the Shāh reached the river Jhelum, and his troops fled hither and thither in disorder. However much the Shāh took off his turban and exhorted his army commanders to show firmness and stand up to the enemy, no one listened to him, and troop after troop crossed the river Jhelum, and fled pellmell, like an army without defence or transport. Travelling thirty *kurohs* in one day-and-night, out of the terror of the Sikhs, they reached Ḥasan Abdāl. There only did they give a breathing time to themselves. All fled, one by

one. In this kind of flight, the *bāzār* of the camp and Shāh['s baggage] was put to sack. One man's turban went to someone else. The [Shāh's] army dispersing on this side of the Attock river [Indus] crossed over to the other side of the river on 22 Sha'bān the same year [25 February 1764]... From the agents of the *sāhūkārs* of Multan, it is learnt that the Shāh has made a long journey, that is, he was killed; but his supporters say that disruption took place among his commanders' troops, but the Shāh left the field alive.

The situation with regard to Charat Singh, Harī Singh, Karorī Mal, Thokā Singh, Lohāra Singh and other Sikh chiefs, who are, as a tribe, so numerous, is that they had come to the place Chak Gurū for the *holī*. After the time of *holka* they have marched to the Jhelum river, and established their posts (*thānas*) at various places. It is reported that they plan to march to Pothūwāl on this side of the Attock river, in order to establish their administration there, and to obtain a large sum from the *zamīndārs* of that district. They have sent letters with horsemen to Ghulām Shāh Laṭṭī, *zamīndār* of *ṣūba* Multān, Muḥammad [Sar-]Buland Khān, uncle of the Shāh, Governor of Kashmīr, and all *zamīndārs*, to send their representatives and pay the money they paid to Shāh Abdālī; otherwise, in the case of delay, the army would be sent [against them.]

The situation in the *ṣūba* [-capital] Lahore is that Hari Singh's men went to take control of the city. Charat Singh's men also went there. As a result a fight took place between them and two hundred persons from both sides were killed or wounded. Finally, peace was arranged. Men of the post (*thāna*) of Charat Singh entered the city. It transpires that Charat Singh's letter has been received by Kābulī Mal, restoring him to his position [as *dīwān*]. Since they [the Sikh chiefs] had demanded Rupees two lakhs from Kābulī Mal, he has summoned all inhabitants and demanded large sums from them. The *sāhūkārs* and wealthy persons have been beaten with sticks, as the Abdālīs used to do. A great calamity has fallen on people there, big or small, money being demanded from everyone.

28 *Zī'l-hijja* 1177 [28 June 1764]

Pp.106-9

Before this, a report containing news of the proceedings of the Imperial Court, of the events in the capital city Shāhjahānābād [Delhi]; of Shāh Abdālī's return to *ṣūba* Kābul, and his despatch of his vizier Shāh Walī Khān to Qandahār to

gather troops to cope with the Sikhs; of Charat Singh marching, with his colleagues, from the *maḥal* of Sīālkot to the Attock river [Indus]; of the camping of Jassā Singh *Kalāl*<sup>12</sup> and other Sikhs in the [Jālandhar] Doāb and their differences and fighting among themselves, ... had been sent, dated 19 Zīqa'd 1177 [20 May 1764] by paid messengers to the headquarters. It is hoped it has been perused by Your Excellency.

Since the Gakkhar *zamīndārs* of this side of the Attock river had in company with the son of the late ['Abdu's] Ṣamad *Khān*, assembled nearly eight or nine thousand horse to fight with the Sikhs and marched towards Jhelum river, Charat Singh with his troops, hearing the news, crossed over to the other side of the same river. A great battle took place between the two sides; and after many had been killed on both sides, the said Gakkhars were unable to carry on the battle and fled to their own home (-district). Charat Singh pursued them, and whatever came to his hand, horses, etc., from them, he put to sack. Going as far as Margan Bakta (?), he returned to Gujarāt Shāh Daulā. Having settled other *maḥals*, he is now camping in that district.

Harī Singh Bhangī<sup>13</sup> has appointed Walī Muḥammad *Khān* as Deputy Governor of *ṣūba* Multān. Since there had been much damage and disrepair suffered by the fort and city wall, the said *Khān* has carried out good repairs and is busy settling affairs there.

Kābulī Mal, the Shāh's *Dīwān* in *ṣūba* Lahore, who, by support of Harī Singh Bhangī, chief of the Sikhs, has been appointed to manage affairs there, pays the tax-money of the said city to the said Harī Singh. Since the grain prices are very high, he has fixed the rate of barley at 11 seers [per rupee] and of wheat, 8 seers. The Rāja of Jammū sends money to the Sikh chiefs according to what has been settled.

28 Zī'lḥijja 1177 [28 June 1764]<sup>14</sup>

Pp.110-11

The facts about Jassā Singh *Kalāl* and others are as follows: Harī Singh Bhangī, Nihāl Singh, etc., have come from the vicinity of Chak Gorū, in accordance with a letter of summons from Jassā Singh *Kalāl*. Having arrived in the [Jālandhar] Doāb, they met each other sincerely and cordially. Accordingly, on 12 Zī'lḥijja the same year [12 June 1764], all these persons, viz., Harī Singh Bhangī, Nihāl Singh, Kardār Singh ...(?), Dāliwāliyān and Gūjar Singh, with a force of nearly thirty thousand horse and foot, crossed over to this side of the Sutlej at the Rupar *ghāt*, and

entered the *chakla* of Sirhind. Their forces are engaged in the sacking and plunder of villages in the *maḥāls* of Ambāla and Shāhābād-with-Kunjpūra. They are also settling matters and intend to invade Antar Ved [Ganga-Yamuna Doāb].

Ālā Singh Jāt, who established his residence in the village of Paṭiāla, and had strengthened his forts in preparation to fight the Sikhs, and has not paid to anyone the tax on his own *ta'alluqa*, under which he has brought the tract including Thānesar, etc., up to Karnāl, saw the large size of the Sikh army, and marched from his seat to meet the said chiefs, whom he joined. He has accepted on behalf of Najībuddaula to pay Rupees eighty thousand in cash towards *Karāh Gurū*. Besides this he has suggested they should [not?] raid Najībuddaula's territory; they can take his [Ālā Singh's] sign (*nishān*) for the payment of the tax settled on him. The Sikh chiefs replied: "You give your sign (*nishān*) for your own payment. We will settle with Najībuddaula ourselves. What have you got to do with his case, that you come in between?"

30 Jumāda I 1178 [25 November 1764]

Pp.112-14

Previous to this a report giving the news of the Court, of happenings at the capital Shāhjahanābād [Delhi]; of the departure of Shāh Abdālī from Qandahār on 1 Rabi' II 1178 [28 September 1764] [for Kābul]....; of the conclusion of the *ashnān* at the tank of Amritsar at Chak Gurū and the departure of the Sikhs from there; of the chiefs Charat Singh, Harī Singh, Sukhā Singh, Nihāl Singh, Gūjar Singh, etc., with suitable troops, gathered in groups, numbering sixty thousand horse, proceeding to Gujarat Shāh Daulā and to the other [western] side of the Jhelum river; of Jassā Singh, Thokā Singh, Khwushhāl Singh, Kardār Singh, etc., coming to the [Jālandhar] Doab, ... and other matters, dated 13 Jumāda-I 1178 [8 November 1764], was sent by paid messengers and may have been seen by Your Excellency.

Jahān Khān [Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī's commander] is encamped in *ṣūba* Kābul and is engaged in gathering troops and waiting for the Shāh to come. It cannot be imagined how without a large army the Shāh can come to Hindūstān to deal with the Sikhs. They are treated with much awe by the Afghāns (*kulāh-poshān*), 'conical-hat wearers').

As to the Sikhs, the Sikh chiefs, Charat Singh and others have crossed over to that side of the Chenāb river and are marching to Multān and towards the Attock river [Indus]. Jassā Singh and others have marched out of the [Jālandhar] Doab, crossing over to

this side of the Sutlej on 13 Jumāda I the same year [8 November 1764] and reached Ambāla, two stages this [eastern] side of Sirhind, on the sixteenth of the same month [11 November]. They besieged Sarāi A'zamābād Talāori. Its *thānadar* Dalil Khān, the *zamīndār* of Kunjpūra, engaged them in an artillery (*topkhāna*) battle, in which Kardār Singh was killed by a musket-shot. Thereafter negotiations were entered into with the said Khān. A force of nearly six thousand crossed over to the other [eastern] side of the Yamuna river at Būriya *ghāt*, where it was fordable. They have sacked a number of villages, reducing them to dust. The *vakīls* [representatives] of Jawāhar Singh [the Jāt ruler of Bharatpur] are accompanying them and are bringing the said army [of the Sikhs] to give him aid.<sup>15</sup> Another [Sikh] force has gone towards the *maḥal* of Jind. The news is that they would soon join Jawāhar Singh. As a result of these events, the people of the town of Pānīpat have fled into the fort, and the inhabitants of Sāili[?], etc., have gone to stay in fortified villages and Jalālābād. At present, great calamities have befallen the country this [western] side of the Yamuna river. Let us see what happens next.

*17 Ramaẓān 1178 [8 March 1765]*

Pp.115-17

Prior to this the news of the Imperial Court; of the events in the capital city Shāhjahanābād [Delhi]; of the arrival of Shāh Abdālī at the place Jhandā Rāmdās and Dera Nānakshāh Faqīr, towards the Jammū Hills; of his march from there to the place Jalālābād; of the obligation imposed on the Rāja of Jammū to send *vakīls* [to the Shāh]; of the high prices of grains and other articles in the Shāh's army; of the guerilla-style (*qazzāqāna*) raid by a Sikh force on the [camp of] residence of the Shāh; .... of the departure of Jassā Singh and others of the Sikh forces from the outposts (?) towards Sirhind and their taking of Rupees thirteen lakhs, due as balance, from Jawāhar Singh..., has been given in the report dated 25 Sha'bān the same year [17 February 1765], sent by paid messengers. His Excellency may have seen this report.

Thereafter: The position of Shāh Abdālī is as follows. He marched from Sulṭānpūr to reach Jālandhar in the [Jālandhar] Doab. He has imposed a forced levy of Rupees eighty thousand on the Afghāns of that place. From the time of his arrival in the [Jālandhar] Doāb, grain prices [within his camp?] have fallen. Upon the petition of the *zamīndārs* of that district, who appeared before him, it was pledged [by the Shāh] that no one should engage in plunder and sacking. But whose orders do the Shāh's troops

obey? Thereafter he crossed over to this [eastern] side of the Sutlej on 12 Ramazān the same year [5 March 1765] now and is encamped at Chhaṭṭanpūr, which is on this [eastern] side of Sirhind, face to face with Koṭāha [?]. The Shāh's men, who had been stationed in some places in the [Jālandhar] Doab and elsewhere, have deserted their posts out of the fear of the Sikhs, and have joined the Shāh's army. Nothing has been achieved [by the Shāh] in respect of quelling the Sikhs.

....

Kashmīrī Mal, by name, *vakīl* of Ālā Singh Jāt, who has his seat at village Patiāla, is present in the Shāh's camp for negotiations. Officials (*sazāwals*) had been sent from the Shāh's court to bring him [Ālā Singh], but he stays in his fort and, out of fear of the Shāh, has not come to present himself; he has sent Rupees forty thousand as a banquet present (*ziyāfat-nazrāna*) to the Shāh. It is rumoured that a settlement has been made for the payment of Rupees three lakhs [per annum?], and a nephew of the said [Ālā Singh] has arrived at the Shāh's camp.

As for the Sikhs, the chiefs Charat Singh, Harī Singh, etc., have spread over and established themselves in the territory of — and also the [Jālandhar] Doāb, and do not allow any posts (*thānas*) of the Shāh to be established. The result is that the Shāh, accompanied by his whole army and commanders, moves from place to place, and does not disperse his army, so that to date no punishment has been inflicted on the Sikhs, and there appears to be no prospect of it in future as well. The Shāh has no other object than pillage and plunder. Once money is given to him, it is probable that he would retire to Lahore. Otherwise, the rumour goes, he will go to the district of Sahāranpūr, crossing over to that [eastern] side of the Yamuna, imposing his authority on all persons and exacting much money.

The news has been received of Jassā Singh Kalāl and others, who from the vicinity of the capital city [Delhi] had gone towards Sirhind, reaching Ambāla. When the news of the Shāh's crossing over to this side of the Sutlej reached them, he [Jassā Singh] in order to avoid a confrontation with the Shāh, moved to Samāna, and then, marching from there, went to Mākhūwāl where he is encamped. The truth is that the Sikh troops do not engage the Shāh's army in close battle (*jang-i ṣaḡf*). The Shāh too is unable to chastise them. They have not abandoned their enmity [lit. thought] of the Shāh, nor will they abandon it; so there is no possibility of a settlement.

Jassā Singh and other Sikh chiefs sent a message to Ālā Singh Jāṭ asking him not<sup>16</sup> to make a settlement with the Shāh, [saying:] “If it comes to siege, we are ready to give assistance.” He replied, saying: “I am a *zamīndār*. I first make a settlement; thereafter, I am helpless. You [on the other hand] can confront the Shāh on equal terms.”

#### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> If by ‘seer’ (*ser*) the *ser-i Shāhjahānī* is meant, its weight should have been 0.84 kg.
- <sup>2</sup> Not *amardās*, as printed.
- <sup>3</sup> Read *ba-janāb for nijāt*.
- <sup>4</sup> The old town of Gujarāt was now so designated after the name of its famous 17th-century saint Shāh Daulā, to distinguish it from the province of Gujarāt.
- <sup>5</sup> Ghamandā Singh or Ghamand Chand, the ruler of Kāngra (1751-74) was given the charge of the Jalandhar Doāb by Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī in 1758; he employed a large force of “Rohillas and Afghans” (J. Hutchison and J.Ph. Vogel, *History of the Panjāb Hill States*, Lahore, 1933, I, pp.175-6).
- <sup>6</sup> Jassā Singh Thokā (carpenter), also called Jassā Singh Rāmgarhia, to be distinguished from his contemporary, Jassā Singh Kalāl (Ahluwāliā). (J.S.G.).
- <sup>7</sup> *Gurmatā* (written here, *gormata*), ‘The Gurū’s counsel or instruction’, and thus not the act of consultation, but the decision taken at such consultation of the principal leaders of the Sikhs at Amritsar. The present reference is valuable in showing that by 1763 the consultation leading to *gurmatā* (standing for what earlier would have been the Gurū’s own decrees or orders) had been well established, and all major Sikh chiefs had to defer to this custom. For *gurmatā*, see W.H. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community: Five Essays*, Delhi, 1975, pp.48-50, 106.
- <sup>8</sup> I.e. the previous report from which extracts are already given; but some facts, e.g., Jahān Khān’s recall from Jalālābād, or the names of the various Sikh chiefs as having actually assembled at Chak Gurū, are not mentioned there.
- <sup>9</sup> *Khawush-aspa*: meaning horsemen, who either have horses of good breeds, or possess of remounts.
- <sup>10</sup> *Karāh* means “a kind of sweetmeats made of flour, sugar and ghee [i.e. *ḥalwā*], very extensively used and generally distributed in the Sikh temples to worshippers” (Maya Singh). *Karāh Gurū* must then bear the sense of money taken ostensibly for expenditure on sacred food distributed in the name of the Gurū.
- <sup>11</sup> The report of 3 March 1764 printed in Kharc, pp.101-3, and in part translated above, does not, however, contain the news of Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī’s defeat, but stops at the stage where the Sikh forces waited for him on the left bank of the Chenāb just on the eve of the battle.
- <sup>12</sup> *Kalāl* is the designation borne by a caste, originally of low status, of distillers and sellers of spiritous liquors in the Panjāb. Sikh *Kalāl*s



## *Sikh Power in the Panjab*

have tended to adopt the name Ahlūwālia, from Ahlū, Jassā Singh's ancestral village, and to disown the original caste-profession (D.Ibbetson, *Panjab Castes*, Lahore, 1916, p.325).

- <sup>13</sup> 'Bhikan' in the printed text as suffix to Hari Singh must be an error for 'Bhangi': in *shikasta* in which the reports must have been written, the two forms would be indistinguishable (J.S.G.)
- <sup>14</sup> Obviously, a supplementary report, since the date is the same as that of the previous report.
- <sup>15</sup> Jawāhar Singh's troops were then cooperating with the Marathas and raiding Najibuddaula's territory near Delhi on the eastern side of the Yamuna.
- <sup>16</sup> The negative seems to have been inadvertently omitted in the printed text, which reads *numāyand* for *na-numāyand*.

## 18

# Sikh Resistance to Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī's Invasion of the Panjāb, 1764-65

From Qāzī Nūr Muḥammad, *Jangnāma*

*Translated by Iqtidar Alam Khan*

Qāzī Nūr Muḥammad's *Jang-nāma* compiled in 1765 is an account of Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī's raid into the Punjab in 1764-65. It is a versified history of a military campaign during which Abdālī had to mainly face the Sikh *misals* of the Panjāb. This is, perhaps, the only surviving account of Abdālī's invasions from the Afghān point of view that furnishes a detailed notice of the resistance offered to him by the Sikhs. Despite Qāzī Nūr Muḥammad's extreme hostility towards the Sikhs, his narrative corroborates the picture of the heroic fight put up by them just as is given in Sikh traditions. For example, Nūr Muḥammad corroborates the story of thirty Sikhs willingly sacrificing their lives in defence of Darbār Sahib by challenging a thirty-thousand strong Afghan cavalry outside the gate of the shrine.

In the following translation couplets shedding light on the religious, political and military ethos of the Sikhs and on the leading Sikh chiefs of the time are selected from the *Jangnāma* and translated into English. The text used for the purpose is the one edited by Ganda Singh, Amritsar, 1939. The translation presented here has been carefully compared with the summary in English (containing "literal translation and paraphrase of the important historical portions") furnished by Ganda Singh in his edition.

In many places, Qāzī Nūr Muḥammad has referred to the Sikh warriors with derogatory expressions, *sag* (dog) or *sagān* (dogs). Often he uses these expressions as deliberate words of abuse. But, in many other places, as Jadunath Sarkār suggests, these expressions are “the result of a miserable pun the force of which is lost on one who cannot read Persian.” (Foreword to Ganda Singh’s ed. of *Jangnāma*). While writing the words “Sikh” or “Sikhān” or “Singh” or “Singhān”, even in a neutral sense the author or scribe resorts to a pernicious manipulation of the script to make these read “*sag*” or “*sagān*”. This variation of nuance is not always taken into account by Ganda Singh which sometimes results in problematic statements, eg., “Do not call the dogs [Sikhs] ‘dogs’, because they are lions” (Ganda Singh’s transl., p.55). We have therefore ignored the pejorative variation and simply read ‘Sikhs’, though, indeed, as Professor Grewal suggests, the reading ‘Singh(s)’ is also as probable.

In the following translation, the “sections” indicated in the sub-headings are those of the text from where the couplets translated are extracted and the numbers within square brackets indicate the pages of the printed text, on which the passage immediately following occurs.

### TRANSLATION

[p.36] Section VI: [Decision of the Baluch chief Nāṣir Khān to join Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī’s campaign in the Punjab.]

[p.37] One day, the just Khān (Nāṣir Khān of Qalat), as was the practice of his predecessors, was consulting the books on *fiqh* [Muslim law] and *ḥadīṣ* [Sayings of the Prophet] in the assembly of the learned, and there was going on a discussion regarding the Quranic injunctions on the merits of *hajj-i ‘umra*, that is, the sacred pilgrimage to Mecca other than *hajj* proper [All of a sudden] a Marri<sup>1</sup> gatekeeper came in and announced the arrival of the news from Dera [Ghāzī Khān] [p.38] that the Sikhs have overrun the Lahore-Multan tract down to Dera and have demolished mosques there... He [the Khān] asked the religious scholars to give a pronouncement [*fatwā*] in the matter... [p.40] They unanimously favoured a war with the enemies but [advised] that first, the permission of the Shāh, the protector of the world [Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī], be obtained. [Accordingly], a letter (‘*arṣa*)

to this effect was drafted, ... and was sent through an express messenger. Even before this, the Shāh had himself written a letter to the Khān [saying]: "The infidels have subjugated the Muslims (lit., 'men of the faith') and have plundered Multan. They have destroyed mosques and carried away Muslims as prisoners. This intelligence has reached me from Multan and Dera [Ghāzī Khān]. If you proceed to *hajj*, these misguided people would bring about a general destruction. You should come from that side and I from this so that we [together] may destroy them root and branch by burning down their habitations. This crusade against an idol-worshipping enemy is surely more important than *hajj*." He [the Shāh] gave a letter in his own hand to this messenger, which this messenger gave to the Khān, requesting him to read it. A *munshī* was immediately called to read it. This [second] letter said: "Sikhs [who are] Hindus deviating from their faith [*dīn*], have come to dominate Multan and Lahore. [They] have overthrown the religious practices [of the Muslims] and have raided the outskirts of Lahore. Not only Lahore, these insolent infidels have struck at Multan also. You are our son, and a brother in religion. Come, so that we may uproot this community of non-believers and capture their women and children." That very moment, he [the Khān] called an assembly so that the contingents of the army may gather in a short time.

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[p.97] Section: XV: *The Shāh's going to Gurū Chak [Amritsar] and his destroying that place.*

[p.98] In short, as these Sikhs withdrew from the battle, they did not stop on the way till they reached Gurū Chak. It is the place of pilgrimage (*ziyāratgāh*) of the infidels. There are located in that place the shrines of those luckless ones...

I [may] narrate how this hideous sect came into being. In India, there was an infidel who\* misguided the unfortunate ones. To Muslims, he said he was a Muslim, and to the Hindus, a Hindu. [p.99] He taught the infidels some evil ways and customs and allowed them to worship idols with full faith...

When the renowned Shāh came to know that the doomed\* Sikhs had gone towards Gurū Chak, which is the place of pilgrimage of the infidels, he (said): "I will unhesitatingly go to that place and massacre the wily Sikhs and also destroy the Chak." Before this occasion also, the Shāh of Islām, acting with faith and devotion, had destroyed and razed it [the Chak] to the

ground. The Sikhs, had repaired it, though not as it was earlier. The Shāh now wished to again destroy that Chak as well as its worshippers, so that it may again be reduced to dust as before.

[p.100]After marching for three [days] and nights, the Shāh arrived at the Chak on the fourth night. The Sikhs, getting the news of tigers coming to attack the dog-hearted ones, had withdrawn from there. When the Shāh arrived at the Chak, he did not find any one of those infidels there. But a few men had stayed back within the internal enclosure so that they might spill their own blood and sacrifice their lives for the Gurū.\* As they saw the Shāh and the entire army of Islām,<sup>2</sup> all, of them came out of the enclosure. Those Sikhs were thirty in number: they did not at all show any fear of being killed nor the dread of death. As they engaged the holy warriors (*ghāzīs*) and as they spilt their blood all the Sikhs\* were killed.\* The Muslims ran to the right and left in search of them, but did not find anyone of the rebellious Sikhs. The Shāh, therefore, had no choice but to return [to Lahore], accompanied by triumph and victory.

[p.101]Section: XXVI: *The return of the King to Lahore, and Discussion on the future plan of Action.*

On his return to Lahore, the Shāh invited all the Khāns of the Afghāns. He also sent for the Khān of the Age [the chief of Qalat, Nāṣir Khān]. All the notables assembled together before the Shāh. Addressing the chiefs, the Shāh said: "What plan shall we adopt for the accursed Sikhs? Wherever we go full of wrath, the Sikhs withdraw from there and are not to be found. Wherever we attack, they move away from there. These Sikhs do not stick to one place. What is the best plan in your opinion?"... Everyone said whatever he had in his mind. The Shāh heard the views (of the chiefs) one by one. When it was the turn of [Nāṣir] Khān, the Shāh looked in his direction and said: "At last, you should say something [as to how] those accursed Sikhs are [to be] trapped". He [Nāṣir Khān] replied, "It is advisable to march from here in pursuit of the Sikhs. If any one of the infidels-comes to oppose us, that Sikh\* shall be destroyed. Otherwise, we shall halt at Sirhind and wait for the news from Najib[uddaula] and Delhi [to ascertain] as to how were they inclined, [for] reconciliation [with the Shāh] or mischief. When you arrive at Sirhind and the news travels to Delhi, the accursed ones would be frightened and take to flight in all directions. Najib would come out of the siege<sup>3</sup> and arrive at your door most eagerly, as a nightingale comes to the rose. Then you would have the option to decide the best course, whether to

advance or withdraw.” When the Balūch Khān had so spoken, the Shāh and the wise Durrānī chiefs approved of this plan.

[p.156]Section XLI: *On the Bravery of the Sikhs in a Religious War and their Bravery in General.*

Do not call the Sikhs ‘dogs’. They are [in fact] lions: in the battle-field [they] are courageous like bold lions. How could a warrior who joins the battle roaring like a lion, be [compared with] a dog? If you wish to be proficient in learning their [manner of] fighting it is such that one and all praise them for it. O swordsman, if you wish to learn the art of war, learn it from them, as they face the enemy like heroes and [also] get out of the scene of action safely. You know, their title is ‘Singh’. It is not just to call them ‘dogs’. O young man, if you do not know the Hindī language, [I tell you] ‘Singh’ means ‘lion’. Truly, they are like lions in battle, [but] surpass Hātim [in generosity] in social gatherings. As they pick up their Indian sword, they overrun the entire country from Hind [North India] to the country of Sind. No one, however strong he may be, can stand up to them in battle. By putting their hands to the use of spear, they bring about the defeat of the enemy’s army. They raise the heads of their spears to the sky and [even] if [there is] Caucasus [in their way] they would pierce through it. When they adjust the bowstrings of their Turkish [*chāchī*] bows and fit into them the enemy-killing arrows and as the strings of the bows are pulled up to their ears, the enemy’s body strikes its head against the mile-tower [an allusion to be to the practice of building towers of the severed heads after a battle]. [p.157] When their battle-axes strike the suits of armour, these turn into knots on the enemies’ bodies. The body of each one of them is like a piece of rock, grander in appearance than [those of] fifty men of the enemy [put together]. If Bahrām Gaur would kill a wild ass, there would be alarm [also] among the lions. As Bahrām is a [mere] wild ass to them [i.e. Sikhs], he bows his head before them. During the battle, if these weapons [viz., spear, bow and arrow and battle-axe] are exhausted, they take out the muskets and enter the field, galloping [*jaulān-kunān*]<sup>4</sup> and raising battle cries like roaring tigers. Often, they expose their chests by removing the [protective covers], many of them allow [their] blood to flow [and mix] with blood spilled on the earth. You say that this musket is present since old, being the invention of the Sikhs and not that of the Sage Luqmān.<sup>5</sup> Although, there are so many muskets to be had, [yet] no one is more proficient than them in this art. To the right and to the left, and also in the front and towards the back, they

fire a hundred muskets in this manner. If you do not believe in what I say, you may enquire from the brave swordsmen who would tell you more than this and would express appreciation of their [Sikhs'] manner of combat. This statement is confirmed [by the fact] that thirty of them engaged thirty thousand [troops] during the battle.<sup>6</sup> If their armies take to flight, do not take it as an actual defeat because this is only a battle tactic of theirs. Beware, beware of them again, because, this tactic of theirs is aimed at scattering the enemy in the excitement of pursuit (*khashm-i kīn*)... Then they turn back to face their pursuers and set fire to even water. Did you not see, how, during the [recent] battle, they [first] deceptively took to flight from before the *Khān* [i.e. Nāṣir *Khān*, the Qalāt chief], [p.158] and how they turned back on him surrounding him on all sides. The renowned *Khān*, then, came down from his horse and shooting arrows and muskets broke out of their circle. O young warrior, you yourself judge them in war! [How] did one of their contingents rush to and attack Multan, plundering the town. Much of the property of the Sarks (?) the Sikhs have carried away. My heart is not inclined to narrate [as to] what has been done by those Sikhs. Since the coming of Adam, no one remembers any one of the creatures [of God] bringing such devastation to Multan. But whatever God wills, every one of us has to submit to.

Leaving aside their [mode of] war, hear you of another aspect that distinguishes them among warriors. At no time do they kill one who is not a man (*nāmard*). Nor would they obstruct the passage of a fugitive. They do not plunder the wealth and ornaments of a woman, be she a well-to-do lady or a maid-servant. There is no adultery among the Sikhs, nor are these people given to thieving. Whether a woman is young or old, they tell her, "*Budhiyā*, go and occupy a corner." The word "*Budhiyā*" in Hindi language means "old woman." No thief is to be found among these Sikhs, nor is a house-breaker [present] among them. They do not approve of adulterers and house-breakers, [but] otherwise their conduct is not commendable. If you are not conversant with their religion, I [should] tell your honour that the Sikhs are the disciples of a Gurū, and that fortunate Guide had lived at Chak. [p.159]. The ways and practices of these [people] are derived from Nānak who showed to the Sikhs a separate path. His [last] successor was Gobind Singh, from whom they received the title 'Singh'. They are not from amongst the Hindus. These miscreants have a distinct religion of their own. Since you have obtained some knowledge of the conduct of the Sikhs, now hear of their country: they have

divided up Panjāb among themselves, giving it to every man, old or young.

[p.157]Section XLII: *An Account of the Limits and Country of the Sikhs*

Jhanḍā holds Chinīot as if in his *jāgīr*; that black-faced man\* rules there as a potentate (*amīr*). Chaṭṭhājāt<sup>7</sup> as well as the whole country of Jhang is the *jāgīr* of Harī Singh the Lame. Vairbāl [Bhairūvāl?] is in the *jāgīr* of Karam Singh; Narol [Narowāl?] is under Jai Singh, of bad demeanour; Kalānaur is under Jassā Kalāl ['the arrack-maker']; and the [Jālandhar] Doab is also [partly] under that unmannerly one. The Bist-Jalandar [Beth Jālandhar Doāb] is [also] under Jassā *Najjār* [Carpenter], for both the Jassas have become allies. They also lord over (lit. eat of) all the district of Baṭāla; their drum and banner [of lordship] is held in unison. Gujjar Singh and Lehnā [Singh] lord over (lit. eat of) Waniye-ke, and collect all of its revenues. Augarh Singh [and] Sānwal hold in their *jāgīr* the place, Pinḍī-i Saiyidān. [p.161] Chamyārī is also in his *jāgīr*; both the Sikhs are potentates (*amīr*) there. There is a city on the banks of a river, which Šūba [Singh] holds, and Sawā [Sobhā?] is Šūbā's close ally. The city's name is Ādina Nagar; and their [the chiefs'] names shine like day. Aimanābād [and] upto the river [Rāvi] is also under the control of these two evil, inauspicious Sikhs. Chartū [Charat Singh] holds Rohtās in his *jāgīr*; that city is under his direction. When Nātha has seized Dipālpūr, which city can comfort the heart? Along with him [his] brother Jassā holds the *jāgīr*; and Karam Singh [too] is a co-sharer with him. Many others too from amongst the renowned Sikhs hold the other territories in their *jāgīr*.<sup>8</sup> From Sirhind, Lahore and the country of Multān up to the Derajāt, those Sikhs\* have divided the country among themselves. They have not learnt to have fear of any one. On Muslims, whether they are near or far, it is proper and obligatory that they should all unite in a body to attack those men,\* and overthrow the foundations of the power of the Sikhs. God! Give our Shāh victory, for the sake of the Prophet who is the benefactor of man, that he [the Shāh] may remove their very foundations from this world, and reduce the repute of those accursed Sikhs!

#### Notes

<sup>7</sup> Marri is an important Balūch tribe of the Kalat (Qalāt) area (D. Ibbetson *Panjab Castes*, Lahore, 1916, p.47). The British sub-district of 'Marri Country' lay to the south-east of Quetta, in the Sulaiman Range. The printed text has Miri, which is an obvious misreading.



## *Resistance to Afghans*

- <sup>2</sup> Nūr Muḥammad specifies the strength of Abdālī's army on this occasion as thirty thousand horse: see our translation of text, p.157, below.
- <sup>3</sup> Najibuddaula was then besieged by the Jāt Rāja Jawāhir Singh of Bharatpur (Ganda Singh, tr. p.36. f.n. 1.)
- <sup>4</sup> The expression *jaulān-kunān* ('galloping') suggests that the Sikh musketeers were mounted and probably trained to fire while riding.
- <sup>5</sup> Luqmān is distinct from the Greek thinker Socrates, with whom Ganda Singh identifies this mythical figure.
- <sup>6</sup> The real import was missed by Ganda Singh as he read *shud hasand* for what must be *sī hasand* both to bear sense and to rhyme. This couplet clearly refers to the heroism of the thirty Sikh warriors who faced thirty thousand Afghān horsemen and died defending Har Mandar Sahib.
- <sup>7</sup> This must refer to the Jāt caste of Chaṭṭhas or Chaṭṭas, "apparently confined to [the district of] Gujranwala, in which district they hold 81 villages" (Ibbetson, *Panjab Castes*, p.118). Chaṭṭhajāt must then be the tract inhabited by them in Gujranwala District.
- <sup>8</sup> Ganda Singh, *Jangnāma* (English introd.), p.59n., suggests that in one or two cases Nūr Muḥammad is not accurate in assigning particular territories to individual chiefs. But the situation in the Panjab was fluid, and we must remember that what Nūr Muḥammad says applies to the year 1764-65 only.

## 19

### An Account of the Sikhs, 1808

From Ghulām ‘Alī Khān, ‘*Imādu’s Sa’ādat*

*Translated by Irfan Habib*

Saiyid Ghulām ‘Alī Khān Naqavī completed in 1808 a history of the 18th-century principality of Awadh, to which he gave the title ‘*Imādu’s Sa’ādat*. This work also contains narratives of political transactions in eighteenth-century Northern India. A short account of the Sikhs, a translation of which follows, is included among these.

The work was written for the British Resident John Bailie, whom the author, a much travelled man, had met in 1807. The text used here is that of the Nawal Kishor edition, [Lucknow], 1897, pp.70-71.

#### TRANSLATION

Pp.70-71

#### Short Account of the Genesis of the Sect of Sikhs in Hindūstān

In the reign of Firdaus Makānī Ṣāḥibzādā Muḥammad Bābur Pādshāh Ghāzī there was a mendicant called Nānak, of the Khatrī caste, such as are called BEDĪ.<sup>1</sup> When the said mendicant had cut himself away from the world and all that it contains and remained immersed in worship for a long period, for the reason that in the Divine Court, the labours of none are allowed to go waste, he attained the status of full spiritual knowledge in the Hindu way (‘*irfān-i Hinduwāna*). Thus from his composition, it appears that he had close knowledge of God. All his sayings are those of philosophers. So long as he lived, he never turned to the world.

His disciples have been of two kinds. Some cut their

hair; others let the hair grow all over. In their sect a barber is hard to find. They cut their nails by themselves. Most of his followers are found with this appearance. Out of one thousand, or rather ten thousand persons, one can find only one or two persons who cut their hair. In the language of his followers, those who keep the beard are known as *Khālṣa*, and those who are beardless are known as *Khulāṣa* [smaller]. In his lifetime his disciples had exceeded a hundred thousand, and all held to one belief: If their *pir* [=Gurū] told them to cut off their own heads, they would do so immediately upon getting a hint of the order. It is said that one day, the son of a successor of his saw a parrot in the hands of a person and became insistent about having it. The owner of the parrot refused to give it. Since those times were near those of Nānak, and they did not hold it permissible to use force against anyone, and most of his disciples wanted to win over the hearts of God's servants [i.e. people], the son's followers bent their heads to the feet of the parrot's owner, saying: "Either please give this parrot to us since our master's son is crying for it, or, if you so desire, we will immediately cut off our own heads and place them at your feet." Seeing this condition of theirs, he gave the parrot to them. Apart from this, on some occasions, Nānak's successors have issued such an order to them, by way of testing them and then greatly regretted having done so, when they had the sight of their heads on their blood-stained bodies.

In short, from Nānak to Gurū Gobind, there have been ten occupants of the seat (*masnad*), who one after another have sat in the place of Nānak and exercised authority over the disciples. Among these ten persons, one Bhagat Bhagwān, by name, was a Muslim; his father was a carpenter.<sup>2</sup> BHAGAT BHAGWĀN is a branch of knowledge among the Hindus.<sup>3</sup> It is popularly held among the Sikhs that the stars of Nānak and King Bābur were similar, so that Bābur, by divine order conquered countries, while Shāh Nānak too brought the realm of the spirit in his grasp. Bābur too has had no more than ten established successors, that is, from him to Muḥammad Shāh — whose authority was supreme from Orissa to Qarābāgh, between Kābul and Qandahār, prior to Nādir Shāh — ten kings can be counted. And from Nānak to Gurū Gobind too, ten perfect spiritual masters are counted. Their saying is: "DAS BĀBE DE, DAS BĀBAR DE" ['Ten of the Bābā; ten of Bābar'].<sup>4</sup> By "Bābā" in this sect is meant the perfect spiritual master.

In the period of Gurū Gobind, one Suthra by name, a Khatrī-born Panjābi Hindu youth, was his disciple. The caste of

Suthra-shāhis cut coloured wooden sticks, and singing in bazars and lanes and chanting rhythmical verses in the Punjabi and Shāhjahanābādī [Delhi] languages, earn their livelihood. Until they get a copper coin or a seer of flour or whatever they demand, they do not move from the front of the shop or house of a person, although swords may be showered upon their heads. Every time they strike the two sticks against each other, they call out with each breath, "*Ḍandī Nānak Shāh*" [stick of Nānak Shāh]. These are his [Suthra's] followers; rather his creation.<sup>5</sup>

Completely moving away from their path of God-worship, the Sikhs began to devote all their courage to the conquest of the country, the pillage of the cities and districts (*parganas*) and high-way robbery. Although in the time of Tugh Bahādur they had taken to these ways, there was not then this much of tumult. Finally, now [1808 AD] the whole country of the Panjāb up to the Attock River [Indus], and this side up to Multān, and from the banks of the Sutlej to Karnāl, outside the Panjāb, which [i.e. Karnāl] is forty-seven *kurohs* distant from Shāhjahanābād [Delhi], all of it, is in the possession of this sect. Their leaders of high dignity are mostly from the lower classes, such as carpenters, shoemakers and Jāts. They are an enemy to the hookah-smoker, but they take pot after pot of hemp (*bang* = *bhang*).

The *ḥalwā* [sweetened flour] offered to Shāh Nānak they call *Gurūdā karāh*, that is, 'the vessel<sup>6</sup> of the Spiritual Master (*murshid*)'. They speak of the container here, by way of metaphor, for what it contains, that is *ḥalwā*. Whenever they raid anyone's territory, they demand *ḥalwā* for the offering to the Master (*murshid*). This means that they make their demand thus: "If you wish that your territory remains safe from the tumult of the troops of Shāh Nānak's army, give us so many lakhs of rupees for the cooking of *ḥalwā* to be offered to Bābā Nānak. Otherwise there would be enormous disturbance."

The salutation in this sect is by utterance of the words *Wāhi Gurū dī fateḥ*.

If they tie up someone in a city and demand money from him, and the other party professes poverty, they come down by stages from a lakh of rupees till a compromise is effected. If a person from amongst them is injured in battle with the enemy, and they have to march from there, they gather straw, set it alight and cremate him, despite there being hopes of his getting better: However much he cries out, it is not listened to.

These days there are about two lakhs of horsemen from

amongst them in the Punjāb and other parts. In addition to the army, which they call DAL, the number of Sikhs in the Punjab has reached millions (lit. 'thousands of thousands'), since yogurt-sellers, confectioners, fodder-venders, grain-sellers, barbers, washermen, all [fully] keep their hair and, saying *Wāhi Gurū dī fateh*, interdine with each other. They are not confined to the Punjāb only. In the whole of Hindūstān from Shāhjahānābād [Delhi] to Calcutta, Haidarābād and Chennāpaṭan [Chennai], groups after groups are found to belong to this sect; but most of them are market people (*bāzārīān*), and only a few are well-born.

The Punjāb is the name of the country which lies between five streams (*nahr*) which they also call rivers (*daryā*).<sup>7</sup> Their names are: Sutlej; then, Beās; then, Rāvi, which flows by Lahore; then, Chenāb, which the wool merchants cross by ropeways, sitting in drums; next Jhelum, which also flows by the city of Kashmir [Srinagar] and which river the Kashmīris call BIHAT. End of the Account of the Sikhs.

It is to be mentioned here that after the death of Mu'īnu'l Mulk Rustam-i Hind<sup>8</sup> and the removal of provincial governors [of Lahore], which passed under the control of Ādina Beg Khān, for some days Prince Timūr Shāh, with the chief commander Jahān Khān, held court at Lahore as deputy for his father, the emperor Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī. To appearances, the Sikhs were subservient to him, but at heart harboured much hostility to him. If two chiefs of theirs made expressions of sincere loyalty and received favours, two other chiefs kept the market of disturbance warm. It should not be hidden that after the Durrānis [Abdālīs] no army can match the Sikh soldiery. In this sect are such strong, tall youths with tiger-like bodies that if a kick of theirs hits a Central Asian (*wilāyatī*)<sup>9</sup> Qipchāq horse, it would assuredly die then and there. Their musket can pick a man at the distance of nine hundred steps. Each of them can ride a horse for over two hundred *kurohs* of the way [in one march]. It is obvious that if they were not like this, how could they have got the better of the army of the *Wilāyat* [Afghanistan]? After all, the Durrānī army too was made to recognize the sharpness of the Sikh sword.

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Notes

<sup>1</sup> Spelling carefully indicated by the author through giving names of consonants as well as long and short vowels. All words whose spelling is thus specified are capitalized in this translation.

<sup>2</sup> There was, of course, no *gurū* of Muslim origin in the line of the Sikh Gurūs who were all Khatris. Bhagat Bhagwān was the founder

of an *Udasi* order (J.S.G.).

- <sup>3</sup> It is to be assumed that by "Bhagat Bhagwān" the author means *bhakti* here.
- <sup>4</sup> See the statement in Gurū Gobind Singh's own composition, *Vichitar Nāṭak*:  
The house of Bābā [Nānak] and of Bābar  
Both derive their authority from God Himself.  
Recognize the former as supreme in religion,  
And the latter supreme in secular affairs.  
(As translated in Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, I (1469-1765), Bombay, 1950, p.65. Cf. M.A. Macauliffe, *Sikh Religion*, Oxford, 1909, V, p.305).
- <sup>5</sup> According to a modern account (D. Ibbetson, *Panjāb Castes*, Lahore, 1916, p.228), the Suthra Shahis were founded by Sucha, a Brahman, before the time of Gurū Gobind Singh. These were disowned by the Sikhs in general and recorded themselves in the censuses as Hindus.
- <sup>6</sup> Read *karsān* for *kazghān* in the printed text.
- <sup>7</sup> *Daryā* in Persian stands for a very large river, since the word usually means sea or ocean.
- <sup>8</sup> Son of Muḥammad Shāh's *wazīr* Qamruddin Khān (d.1748) and Governor of Lahore, 1748 to 1753, when he died.
- <sup>9</sup> *Wilāyat* in Indo-Persian usage comprehended Afghanistan, Central Asia and Iran.

## 20

### The Sikh Community, 1825

From James Skinner, *Tashrīhu 'l Aqwām*

*Translated by Shireen Moosvi*

This rather late account of the Sikh community is taken from the *Tashrīhu 'l Aqwām*, Br. Lib. Add. 2755, ff.1599-160b, that according to its author, James Skinner, was completed on 25 August 1825 at the Hansi cantonment (now in Haryana).

James Skinner (1778-1841) was the son of a Scottish officer of the East India Company and a Rājput mother. He had served under the Sindhia's generals de Boigne and Perron (1796-1803) and later under the English commander Lord Lake, and was given the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in the British Royal Army.

He claims to have drawn his material for this account of the origin and occupation of various castes and tribes, from "Sanskrit" sources, which, he says in his preface, he got translated into Persian. But it is clear that he has mainly relied on local information, and this can be seen from his account of the Sikhs translated below.

#### TRANSLATION

**Account of the Sikh Community as obtained from trustworthy persons of that Community**

The Sikhs are the community of the followers and disciples of Gurū Gobind Singh of the family of Bābā Nānak. They glorify and praise God in the manner of their [Spiritual] Master. The essence of the worship of this sect consists of the reading of the verses of their Master which they recite with song and music,

raising a heart-captivating chant, thereby pleasing themselves and their listeners. The basis of the religion and ways of the Sikhs are such that Gurū Gobind Singh, the tenth occupant of the seat of the line (*silsila*) of Bābā Nānak, along with his spiritual position, attained also the position of a Rāja, and had the sermon (*khutba*)<sup>1</sup> and coins contain his name [as sovereign]; and today too the coin and *khutba* are current in his name in the Punjāb. Seeking to obtain the banishment of Muslims, he worshipped at the shrine of Nainā Devī, situated in the Northern Mountains, for one year. And during this period he did not cut the hair of his head, arm-pits and pubes, so that after the completion of the stipulated period, the goddess (*Devījī*) became kind to him and told him, "I have banished your enemies".<sup>2</sup> After obtaining his wish, he departed from there and came back to his own place, with the same appearance and condition. As for the worship that his disciples rendered, he taught and instructed them to follow the same practice and not to cut the hair of their heads, arm-pits and pubes. He gave the name Sikh to that religion.

The custom of the said Sikhs is that they do not believe in anyone except their own Master, and they worship the sayings of their Master, which they call *Bābī*, regarding it as the cause of bliss and happiness in this and the other world. Any one from any caste (*qaum*), whether Brahman or sweeper, may join their faith and order, and they allow no distinction among them in eating and drinking. They do not recognize any difference between one another [among themselves], and eat and drink from a single bowl. All who adopt the beliefs of this sect (*silsila*) are called Sikhs. They completely avoid the razor and the smoking-pipe. Unlike the Hindus, they do not purify the ground with water and mud for cooking their meal. Barring beef, they consume wine, meat of wild pig, and other animals and birds, not abstaining from anything. They consider *halālī* meat [of animals slaughtered in the Muslim manner] as distasteful and forbidden, and eat the *jhatka* meat, that is the meat of any animal slaughtered by the sword. They do not<sup>3</sup> tie on their heads red turbans from the dye of safflower. Most of them put on blue turbans. The wearing of *kachchha* [short breeches] is very common in this community. They are divided into two named groups. The first, comprising those who put on blue attire which Gurū Gobind Singh used to wear at the time of battle, are designated Akālī Sikhs (*Sikh Akālīa*); the second, simply called Sikhs, do not follow any restriction on the colour of their dress. All follow the profession of soldiery and are brave, being



without peer in the art of musketry and mobile warfare (*chakkar-bāzī*). The *Akālī* sect is particularly courageous and warlike. But they are not well-versed in fighting with the sword, and hardly ever perform well in close fighting (*ṣaf-jang*, 'battle of the line'), which requires fighting with sword and spear, and which is called 'cold iron'.<sup>4</sup> They harbour a bitter enmity and hostility against the Muslim community, and consider killing them an act of great merit. Earlier, the Sikhs followed the way of life of mendicants, but from the times of Gurū Gobind Singh they have become men of state and government.

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Notes

- <sup>1</sup> *Khuṭba* is the sermon delivered at the Muslim Friday congregational prayer in which the name of the reigning sovereign used to be mentioned. Such mention was deemed to signify a general acceptance of the ruler on the part of his subjects.
- <sup>2</sup> For the Sikh tradition about Gurū Gobind Singh's organising a ceremony at the shrine of Nainā Devī, see Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Bombay, 1950, pp.67-68: The Devī could not appear, and the Gurū then unsheathed his sword and said of it, "This is the goddess of power!"
- <sup>3</sup> The text has the negative, *na mī-bandand*.
- <sup>4</sup> *Āhan-i sard*. This expression is also used figuratively for the human heart. The meaning seems to be that close fighting requires a stout heart.

# Index

- Abu'l Fazl 3, 55  
 Abdu'r Rasul 15  
 Abdu's Samad Khan 157, 194  
 Abdus Samad Khan Bahadur Diler Jang  
 125, 138, 140, 152  
 Adina Beg Khan 172, 188–89, 215  
 Adina Nagar 210  
 'Abdu'l Qadir Jilani 179  
 Afghan 89, 166, 169  
 Afghans 119, 148, 199, 207  
 Afzal *Bakhshi* 145  
 Afzal Khan 194  
 Agha Ahmad Ali 55  
 Agra 58  
 Ahkam-i-Alamgiri 3, 14–15, 96  
 Ahmad Shah 184  
 Ahmad Shah Abdali 28–32, 34, 187–88,  
 204, 215  
 Ahmad Shah Durrani 170–71, 181–83, 185  
*Ahmad Shah Durrani, the Father of Mod-  
 ern Afghanistan* 170, 188  
 Aimanabad 210  
 Ajit Singh 18–19, 163, 167  
 Ajmer 101, 166  
 Akali 36, 38, 219  
 Akali Sikhs 218  
 Akbar 12, 48  
*Akbarnama* 3, 12, 48, 55  
 Akbarabad (Agra) 105  
 Akhbarat 13–14, 16, 106  
*Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i Mu'alla* 3, 106  
 'Alam Beg Khan 173  
*Alamgir* 105, 132, 165, 187  
 Ala Singh Jat 189, 192, 194, 202  
 Aligarh 50, 142  
 Aligarh Historians 1  
 Aligarh Historians Society 49  
 'Ali Hamid Khan 134  
 Ali Nadeem, Rezavi, S. 49, 85, 142  
 Ali Quli Beg 75  
 Allahabad 143  
 Ambala 32, 135, 190, 201  
 Amber 106  
 Amiru'l Umara Bahadur 147, 149  
 Amritsar 30, 31, 61, 118, 192, 199, 204  
 Angat (Angad) 112  
 Arabia 103  
 'Arif Beg Khan 125  
 Arjan Mal 62  
 Asiatic Society 55  
 Aslam Khan 20, 119  
 Assam 107  
 Athar Ali, M. 60, 85  
 Augarh Singh 210  
 Aurangabad 124, 137, 177  
 Aurangzeb 12–13, 94, 96, 104, 107  
 Awadh 143, 212  
 'Azimabad 121  
 Baba Gurditta 9  
 Baba Nanak 5, 12, 64–65, 88, 92–93, 217–  
 18  
*Babi* 218  
 Babur 164, 213  
 Bahadur Shah 18, 22, 160  
 Bahadur Shah Ghazi 123  
 Bahlolpur 135  
 Bahram Gaur 208

# INDEX

- Bahrapur 136  
*bahrupiya* 115, 126  
 Bailie, John 212  
 Baisakh 67, 77  
 Baisakhi 118, 167, 191  
*Bakhshi* Ghazi Beg Khan 171  
 Bala Guru 165  
 Balkh 75  
 Baluch 148  
 Baluch Khan 208  
 Banda Bahadur 1, 17, 19, 21, 23, 35, 108,  
 111, 142, 155, 160, 163  
*Bani* 36  
 Bankipur Library 131  
*Bansavalinama* 26  
 Bari Daab 20  
 Batala 90, 137, 164, 210  
 BEDI 212  
 Bengal 161  
 BHAGAT BHAGWAN 213  
 Bhai Gurdas 4–8  
 Bhalla Khatri 10, 165  
 Bhandari Khatri 11  
 Bharatpur 200  
 Bhau Sahib 189  
 Bhimsen 13, 104  
 Bhup Prakash 150  
 Bidhi Chand (Bidhia) 9, 74  
 Bilaspur 93  
 Bombay 60  
 Brahman 7, 66, 70, 218  
 Brahmans 13  
 Brahmanical 3  
 British Library 110, 160, 170, 217  
 British Royal Army 217  
 Buddha 72  
*Budhiya* 209  
 Buland Khan Sadozi 179  
 Burhanpur 100  
 Buriya 135, 194  
  
 Calcutta 35, 215  
 Central Asian (*wilayati*) 215  
*Chabutra-i-kotwali* 141  
*Chahar Gulshan* 3, 14, 101, 163–64  
*Chak* Guru (Amritsar) 172, 174, 176, 190–  
 91, 196  
 Chamba 124  
 Chamryari 210  
*Chandal* 7  
  
 Chandu Shah 4  
 Charat Singh 192, 194, 196, 199, 201  
 Charhat Singh 31  
 Chenab 188, 195, 199, 215  
 Chennapatan 215  
 Chennai 35  
 Chhat 135  
 Chhattanpur 201  
 Chhina Jat 9  
 Chiniot 210  
 Chitor 15, 101–02  
 Choiya Nata 167  
 Christian 2  
  
*Dabistan* 1–3, 5, 8–11, 56, 59, 61, 77  
*Dabistan-i Mazhab* 59, 87  
 Dakhin 161  
 Dalpat Rao Bundela 104  
*Dandi Nanak Shah* 214  
 Dara Shukoh 12, 94  
 Darbar Khan 153  
 Darbar Sahib 204  
 Dargahi 167  
 DAS BABAR DE 213  
 DAS BABE DE 213  
 Dasuha 124  
 Daulat Khan 62  
 Daulat Khan Lodi 10, 61, 71  
 Debi Chand 9  
 Deccan 60, 101  
 Delhi 35, 167, 207  
 Derajat 210  
 Dera Nanakshah Faqir 200  
 Deva 70  
*Deviji* 218  
*dharmaśul* 6  
 Diler Jang 126  
 Dipalpur 210  
 Diwan 4  
 Doab 190  
 Doab Beth Jalandhar 151  
 Durrani 215  
*Dwapar-jug* 65  
  
 East India Company 217  
  
 Faizullah Beg 183  
 Faridabad 119  
 Farrukh Siyar 19, 22, 131  
*Farrukh-Siyar Namah* 27

## Index

- Fat'h Darshan* 156  
 Firdaus Makani Zahiruddin Babur 61  
 Firdous Makani Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur Padshah Ghazi 212  
 Firoz Khan Mewati 121, 144, 146
- Gakkhar 198  
 Ganda Singh 1, 27, 50, 61, 96, 101, 106, 170, 204-05  
 Ganga-Yamuna Doab 32, 199  
*Guruda karah* 214  
 Ghaus-i Samadani 179  
 Ghulam 'Ali Khan 34-35  
 Ghulam Qadir 155  
 Gobindwal 70  
 Granth 36  
*Granth Sahib* 9  
 Grewal, J.S. 1, 50, 192-93, 205  
 Gujar Singh 193, 199  
 Gujarat 60, 177  
 Gujarat Shah Daula 189-90, 195, 199  
 Gujjar Singh 210  
 Gurdaspura 21, 125, 138  
 Gurditta 70  
*Gurmata* 192  
*Gur Parmesar ek hai* 6  
*Gursobha* 15-16  
*Guru* 5, 11, 162, 179  
 Guru Amar Das 5, 10, 165  
 Guru Angad 5, 11, 13, 64, 95, 165  
 Guru Arjan 3-5, 48, 55, 95  
 Guru Gobind Singh 1, 3, 12-20, 33, 96, 103, 106-07, 113-14, 160, 163, 213, 217-19  
 Guru Granth 37  
*Guru Granth Sahib* 48  
 Guru Har Kishan 12, 92  
 Guru Har Rai 11, 12, 72, 165  
 Guru Hargobind 4-6, 8-9, 12, 60, 67, 69, 71, 74, 76-78, 92-93  
 Guru-Panth 37  
 Guru Miharban 5  
 Gurmukhi 48  
 Guru Nanak 1, 5-6, 10-14, 34, 86-87, 104, 107  
 Guru Ram Das 5, 10, 64, 68, 165  
 Guru Tegh Bahadur 12-14, 92, 105, 112-13, 165, 214  
 Gwalior 68  
*Gyani* 70
- Habibganj 164, 171  
 Hadi Kamwar Khan 155  
*Hadiqatu'l Aqalim* 27  
 Haidarabad 35, 215  
 Haji 'Ata Khan 175-76  
 Haji Yar Beg 119  
 Haji Saiyid Isma'il 119  
*halali* 218  
*halwa* 214  
 Hamid Khan Bahadur 150  
 Hamiduddin Khan 147  
 Hansi cantonment (Haryana) 217  
 Hapur 167  
 Har Rai 110  
 Hari Prakash 150  
 Hari Singh 196, 199, 210  
 Hari Singh Bhangi 198  
 Hathi Singh 18-19, 163, 166  
*hatta jori* 70  
 Hedges, Robert 127  
*Hijri* 71  
 Hindu 57, 162, 212  
*Hindu Ka Guru* 14  
 Hindus 2, 89, 102, 120, 159, 160  
 Hindustan 35, 160, 162, 199  
*holi* 197  
*holka* 197  
 Hoshiarpur 151  
 Hyderabad 29, 187
- Ibrahim Khan 61  
 Ibrahimuddin Khan 154  
*Ibratnama* of Muhammad Qasim 3, 13, 18, 21, 110, 111, 131-32, 155  
 Ilah Wardi Beg 178  
*'Imadu's Sa'adat* 3, 34, 212  
 Inayatullah Khan "'Ismi'" 94  
 Iqbal Husain 49, 90, 131  
 Iqtidar Alam Khan 49, 204  
 Iradatmand Khan 124  
 Iran 75  
 Iraq 75  
 Irfan Habib 49, 59, 96, 100, 110, 160, 163, 169, 187, 212  
*'irfan-i Hinduwana* 212  
 I'timaduddaula Bahadur 152  
 I'timadu'ddaula Muhammad Amin Khan 157

## INDEX

- Jagannath 112  
 Jahan Khan 28, 192-93, 195, 199, 215  
 Jahangir 3, 4, 165  
 Jahandar Shah 137  
 Jai Singh Kanhiya 33  
 Jalalabad 193  
 Jalal Khan Ruhela 22, 131, 135  
 Jalandhar 190, 200  
 Jalandhar Doab 4, 29, 192, 210  
 Jammu 107, 122, 151, 178, 180, 182-83, 198  
 Jammu Hills 200  
 Jamshed Khan Afghani 16-17  
*Janamsakhis* 10  
*Jangnama* of Qazi Nur Muhammad 3, 32, 49, 204-05  
 Jannat Makani 122  
 Jannat Makani Jahangir 72, 122  
 Jassa Singh 30, 32, 33, 190, 192, 194, 199, 202, 210  
 Jassa Singh Kalal 195, 198, 201, 210  
 Jat 6  
*Jat masand* 9  
 Jawahar Museum 164  
 Jawahar Singh 200  
 Jhanda 210  
*jhatka* 218  
 Jhelum 30, 192, 198, 215  
*Jog Basisht* 65  
 Jumdadu'l Mulk Khan-i Khanan 145-46  
  
 Kabiruddin Ahmad 155  
 Kabul 75, 137, 148, 161, 185, 192  
 Kabuli Mal 191, 197  
*kachchha* 36, 218  
 Kahlur 16, 17  
 Kaiwan Parra 9  
 Kalanaur 137, 210  
*Kal-jug* 65  
 Kam Bakhsh 100, 115  
*Kanwara Dola* 19  
*Karah Guru* 196  
 Karam Singh 210  
 Kardar Singh 199, 200  
*karmandal* 65  
 Karnal 34, 117, 190, 214  
 Kartarpur 4, 69, 86  
 Kashi 13, 112  
 Kashmir 31, 59, 161, 215  
 Kashmiri Mal 201  
  
 Keshav Rao 152  
 Kesar Singh Chhibber 4  
 Khafi Khan 25, 155-56  
*Khalsa* 8, 13, 17, 21, 23, 34, 107-08  
 Khan Bahadur Dilar Jung 153  
 Khandla 184  
 Khan-i Khanan Bahadur 143  
 Khan-i Khanan Bahadurshahi 121  
 Khare, G.H. 107  
 Kharkhoda 26, 161  
 Khatri 4, 6, 66, 157, 165, 212-13  
 Khidmatyab Khan 148  
 Khobrekhar, V.G. 104  
 Khoja Mirza 172  
 Khudavardi Beg Aghar Khan 119  
*Khulasa* 34, 213  
*Khulasatu't Tawarikh* 3, 90  
 Khusrau 57  
 Khutba (Sermon) 218  
 Khwaja 'Abd Khan 180  
 Khwaja Ali of Malerkotla 20  
 Khwaja Amanullah 148  
 Khwaja Bakhtyaruddin Kaki 127  
 Khwaja Mirza Khan 179  
 Khwaja Qutbuddin 154  
 Khwaja 'Ubaid Ullah 30  
 Khwaja' ubaid Khan 191  
 Khwushhal Singh 199  
 Kiratpur 5, 93  
 Kotla Begam 20  
 Kot Mirza Jan 125  
*Kotwal* 153  
*Kotwali* 158  
 Kunjpura 32, 184, 196  
 Kunwara Dola 167  
  
 Lahina 11  
 Lahore 23, 28-29, 33, 56, 60, 94, 105, 107, 113, 120, 123, 127, 138, 150, 151, 169, 171, 174, 182, 185, 188-89, 194-95, 201, 206-07  
*Lakhis* 119, 215  
 Lakhpat Rai 173  
 Lehna Singh 192-93, 210  
 Lohgarh 25, 137, 147  
 Lord Lake 217  
 Ludhiana 117, 135  
  
 Macauliffe, M.A. 56, 97, 113  
 Machhiwara 135

## Index

- Madhav Rao, P.S. 170  
 Mahabat Khan 121  
 Mahabat Khan Bahadur 151  
 Mahabat Khan Ghalib Jang 145-46  
 Maharashtra 187  
 Maharaja Ram Singh 13  
 Maharaja Ram Singh Jiu 107  
 Majida Bano 49, 155  
*Makhaz-i Tawarikh-i Sikhan* 50, 61, 96, 106  
 Makhuwal 201  
*Malamatyas* 85  
 Malner Kotla 181  
 Manjha 192  
*mansabdar* 15  
 Marathas 29, 33  
 Maratha Confederacy 187  
 Mardana 91, 164  
 Mata Sundari 18, 19, 163, 166-67  
 Mata Sahib Devi 18  
 Mathura 166  
 Maulana Azad Library (Aligarh) 164  
 Mecca 13, 205  
 Mehta Bhagwant Rai 119  
 Mian Jamal 4  
 Miharban 5  
 Mir Badahra 68  
*Mir-i Atish* 147  
*Mir Atish Ibrahimuddin Khan* 153  
 Mir'at-i Waridat 3, 26, 160  
 Mir Ni'mat Khan 176  
 Mirza 'Ali Yar Beg 98  
 Mirza Muhammad 3, 18  
 Mirza Muhammad *bin* Mu' tamad Khan *bin* Dayanat Khan 131  
 Mirza-Zu'lfikar 59  
 Mughal 2, 119, 160-61, 179  
 Mughal Emperors 3, 5  
 Mughal Empire 90  
 Mughlani Begam 169, 173  
 Muhammad Amin Khan 21, 24, 123, 126, 136, 140, 143-45  
 Muhammad 'Aqil 174  
 Muhammad Aurangzeb 'Alamgir 112  
 Muhammad A'zam Shah 133  
 Muhammad Hadi Kamwar Khan 23, 142  
 Muhammad Khan Kadal 119  
 Muhammad Mu'azzam Bahadur Shah 126  
 Muhammad Mun'im Khan 98  
 Muhammad Qasim 13, 17, 21, 110  
 Muhammad Shah 213  
 Muhammad Shaf' Warid 160  
 Muhammad Zaman Ranghar Rajput 120  
 Muharram 56, 71  
 Mu'inu'l Mulk Rustam-i Hind 215  
 Mukhlis Khan Bahadur 151  
 Mukhlispur 20, 118, 122  
 Mulla Pir Muhammad Wa'iz 119  
 Multan 31, 33, 105, 132, 138, 197, 199, 206, 209  
*Muntakhabu'l Lubab* 3, 25, 155  
 Munim Khan-i-Khanan 133  
*murshid* 214  
 Murtaza Khan 57  
 Murtaza Khan Bharech 181-82, 183  
*Musalman ka Pir'* 14  
 Muslims 2, 89, 102, 159, 162, 210  
 Muslim Community 219  
 Muzaffar Alam 100, 142, 170  
 Muzaffar Khan Bahadur 152  
 Nadir Shah 169, 213  
 Naina Devi 36, 218  
*Nairang-i Zamana* 3, 15-16, 101  
 Najib Khan 182, 184  
 Najibuddaula 199  
 Nanak 111, 132, 212, 213  
 Nanak *Bani* 63  
 Nanak Mata 167  
 Nanak-Panthis 14, 77, 133, 163-64  
 Nanak Shah Dervish 114  
 Nanakshahis 167  
 Nasir Khan 209  
 Nawab 'Abdus Samad Khan Bahadur Diler Jang 132  
 Nawab Mirza Khan 180  
 Nawab Mu'inu'l Mulk 171  
 Nawab Shuja'uddaula 192  
 Nawab Zabita Khan 184-85  
 Nawal Kishor 60, 212  
 Nihal Singh 199  
 Niranjan 5  
 Nizam 187  
 Nizamul Mulk Asafu'ddaula 143  
 Northern Mountains 218  
 Nur Muhammad Khan 124  
 Nuskha-i Dilkusha 3, 16, 104  
 Orissa 60

## INDEX

- Padshah 13  
 Pail 135  
 Panipat 200  
*Panith Prakash* 4, 26  
 Parmanand 73–74, 76  
 Parmeshwar 5  
*parra shikar* 70  
 Parsi 2, 59  
 Parsrur 177, 195  
 Patiala 32, 199, 201  
 Patna 59  
 Payinda Khan 68  
 Payne, C.H. 56  
 Persian 48–49, 110, 155, 217  
 Peshawar 78, 191–93  
 Peshwa 187  
 Phagwara 5  
 Pindi-i Saiyidan 210  
 Pirana Murari 73  
 Pir Hassu Teli 86  
 Poona 187  
 Pratap Mal 77–78  
 Prince Khusrau 4, 67  
 Prithia 5  
 Prithi Chand 5  
 Punjab 12, 22, 29, 60, 70, 75, 132, 157,  
 160, 180, 204, 214–15, 218  
 Punjabi 213–14  
  
*qamargha* 70  
 Qamruddin Khan 23, 126, 140, 153  
 Qamruddin Khan I'timaduddaula 166  
 Qandahar 191, 197, 213  
*Qanungo* 119  
 Qarabagh 213  
 Qasim Khan 174, 183  
*qum* 218  
 Qazi Nur Muhammad 32, 204–05  
 Quranic verse 134  
*Qusbegi* 148  
 Qutbshahi 60  
  
 Rachnao Doab 137  
 Rafi 'u-d Darjat 131  
 Raja Bhup Prakash 24  
 Raja Ghamanda Singh 190  
*Raja Gopal Singh Bhadauria* 152  
 Raja Janak 6  
*Raja Nagarmal* 188  
 Raja Rajrup 94  
  
*Raja Udit Singh Bundela* 149, 152  
 Rajasthan 15  
 Rajasthan State Archives 106  
 Rajput 15  
 Ram 164  
 Ramazan 187, 191  
*Ramdas* 66, 73  
 Ramdaspur 4, 14  
 Rampur 136  
 Ram Rai 12  
 Ram Rauni 172  
 Rana 10, 103  
 Ratan Singh Bhangu 4  
 Ravi 11, 86, 113, 164  
 Rawalpindi 31, 193, 195  
 Riza Library Rampur 96  
 Riza Quli Khan 191  
 Rohtas 210  
 Rohtasgarh 195  
 Rupar 135, 190  
 Rustam Khan 28, 178–80  
 Rustam Dil Khan (Bahadur) 144, 146,  
 149–50  
  
 Sa 'adat Yar Khan 183  
*Sachcha Badshah* 156  
 Sa'adat Khan Afridi 190  
*sadh-sangat* 6  
 Sadhaura 118, 135, 142–43  
 Sage Luqman 208  
 Saharanpur 22, 134–135  
 Sahrind 99, 108, 134–35, 143  
 Sahib Devi 167  
 Saiyid Ahmed 56  
 Saiyid 'Abdullah Khan 150  
 Saiyid 'Abdullah Khan Baraha 143  
 Saiyid Aslam Khan 118  
 Saiyid Ghulam 'Ali Khan Naqavi 212  
 Saiyid Jamiluddin Khan 171–72  
 Saiyids 119  
 Saksena, Rai Chaturman 163  
 Salimgarh 150  
 Salim Shah Afghan 91  
 Samana 201  
 Sambhal 167  
 Sankrant Megh 91  
 Sanskrit 217  
 Sarai Khan Khanan 175  
 Sarai A'zamabad Talaori 200  
*Sardar Jahandar Khan* 184

## Index

- Sardar Jahan Khan* 184–85  
*Sardar Khan Rajput* 22  
*Sardar Zain Khan* 181–82  
*Sarkar, Jadunath* 90, 104, 125, 170  
*Sar-jug* 66  
*Sawai Jai Singh* 106  
*Shahabad* 32, 135  
*Shah 'Abdu'r Rahman Bakhtyar* 14, 112  
*Shah 'Alam* 133  
*Shah Balawal* 174  
*Shahdaura* 161, 194  
*Shah Hasan Durr* 113  
*Shah 'Inayat* 119  
*Shah Jahan* 4, 69, 72, 165  
*Shahjahanabad* 16, 121, 127, 139, 165, 171, 177, 192–93, 197, 214  
*Shah Nanak* 213  
*Shah Pasand Khan* 195  
*Shahpur* 188  
*Shah Wali Khan* 195, 197  
*Shaikh Farid* 14  
*Shaikh Muhammad Dauim* 124  
*Shaikh Muhammad Yar* 15, 198  
*Shaikhs* 119  
*Shams Khan Khweshgi* 22, 135–36  
*Sher Muhammad* 20  
*Sher Shah* 164  
*Shihabuddin* 50  
*Shireen Moosvi* 49, 55, 56, 217  
*Sialkot* 177–80, 190, 193  
*Sikandar Lodi* 132  
*Sikhan* 205  
*Sikhs* 1, 28, 38, 59, 73, 107, 167, 175–76, 179, 183, 202, 204, 206–09, 215, 218–19  
*Sikh Gurus* 3  
*Sikh Panth* 8  
*Sikh Religion* 86, 97  
*Sind* 208  
*Sindhia* 217  
*Singh* 205  
*Sirhind* 31, 176, 180–81, 192, 199, 201, 207  
*Skinner, James* 35, 217  
*Siwalik Hills* 161  
*Sodhi Khatri* 10  
*Sodhra* 195  
*Sodh Ramdas* 176  
*Stephenson, Edward* 127  
*Sri Gora* 64  
*Srinagar (Garhwal)* 150  
*Suchadanand* 116, 148  
*Sujan Rai* 11–12  
*Sujan Rai Bhandari* 14  
*Sukha Singh* 199  
*Sultan Bahlol Lodi* 91  
*Sultanpur* 200  
*Suraj Mal* 103  
*Surat Singh* 11, 85  
*Surman, John* 127  
*Suthra* 213  
*Sutlej* 117, 201, 214  
*Sutlej-Yamuna Divide* 20  
*Tahmas Khan* 3, 27, 169  
*Tahmasnama* 170  
*Talwandi* 11  
*Talwandi Rai Bhona* 91, 164  
*Tureta-jug* 65  
*Tarpolia* 141  
*Tashrihu' l Aqwam* 3, 33, 217  
*Tazkiratu's Salatin-i Chaghata* 3, 23, 100, 111, 155  
*Tazkiratu'sh Shaikh wa'l-Khadam* 85  
*Teja Singh* 1  
*Thanesar* 121, 135, 199  
*Thoka Singh* 190, 196, 199  
*Timur Shah* 215  
*Trehan Khatri* 10  
*Turkey* 169  
*Turki* 70  
*Turkish* 208  
*Tuzuk* 56  
*Tuzuk-i Jahangiri* 3, 56  
*Udaipur* 101  
*Urdu* 50  
*Uzbek* 169  
*Vairbal (Bhairuval)* 210  
*Vaishnava* 14, 164  
*vakil* 106  
*Vars* 5  
*Vars of Bhai Gurdas* 6  
*Wahi Guru* 76  
*Wahi Guru di fateh* 214–15  
*Wali Muhammad Khan* 198  
*Wazir Khan* 14, 17, 19, 99, 108, 111, 114–18, 134, 148, 161



## INDEX

*Wazir Jahan Khan* 174  
*Wazir Shah Wali Khan* 182  
*Wilayat* 189, 215  
*Wilson, C.R.* 127  
  
*Yamuna* 134, 196, 201  
*Yazdani* 59, 76

*Zafar Hasan M.* 90  
*Zafarnama* 15, 48, 96  
*Zain Khan* 183, 190–92  
*Zainuddin Ahmad Khan* 137–38, 151  
*Zamindar* 15  
*zamindari* 120  
*Zorawar Singh* 16

This volume is a part of the research and publication programme of the Indian History Congress to commemorate the tercentenary of the Khalsa. It presents translations of all major Persian sources of Sikh history up to 1765, when Sikh power was established over the Punjab. These sources offer details that are not otherwise available, and richly supplement the information preserved in the Punjabi (Gurmukhi) traditions. Yet, until now, most of the Persian texts translated here have not been available in English; the translations given here thus meet a long-felt need. These are freshly made, with much care exercised to preserve accuracy and provide adequate annotation. Of the two editors, Professor J.S. Grewal has contributed an introduction critically assessing the value of these texts for reconstructing Sikh history. Professor Irfan Habib, on his part, has organized the work of translation, having himself rendered a number of the texts into English for this volume.

J.S GREWAL, formerly Professor of History and then Vice-Chancellor, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, and Director, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, is an eminent historian of the Sikhs, and of medieval and modern Indian history in general. His numerous works include *Guru Nanak in History* (1969) and *Sikhs of the Punjab* (1990).

IRFAN HABIB, formerly Professor of History at the Aligarh Muslim University, is a well-known historian and author of *The Agrarian System of Mughal India* (1963; revised edn 1999), *An Atlas of the Mughal Empire* (1982), and *Essays in Indian History: Towards a Marxist Perception* (1995). He is General Editor of the People's History of India series, and has authored/co-authored the following monographs in the series: *Prehistory, The Indus Civilization, The Vedic Age* (with Vijay Kumar Thakur), *Mauryan India* (with Vivekanand Jha), *Indian Economy, 1858–1914*.

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